Hanamatsuri

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Contents

Chapter 1 5
Afterword 129

Hanamatsuri

Hanamatsuri

THERE IS A PASTIME OF THE WEALTHY KNOWN AS THE "FLOWER CHOICE."
THE CHOSEN "FLOWERS" ...
ARE BOYS WHOSE CALLING IN LIFE IS ART.
IN SEARCH OF PATRONS, THEY EXHIBIT THEIR ARTISTIC SKILLS AT PARTIES WHERE BUSINESSMEN GATHER.
THEY ARE THE "FLOWER MASTERS."
THOSE WITH MONEY TO SPARE CHOOSE A "FLOWER" WHOM THEY KEEP BY THEIR SIDE AND LAVISHLY INVEST IN OUT OF DEVOTION TO THAT ART.
THAT IS THE "FLOWER FESTIVAL."
THE "FLOWER MASTERS" CHOOSE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL, MOST TALENTED "FLOWERS"...
AND BRING THEIR "FLOWERS" TO COUNTLESS FLOWER FESTIVALS, AS THOUGH SHOWING OFF JEWELS TO EACH OTHER.
AND IF ONE SHOULD FIND A BETTER "FLOWER" AT A FLOWER FESTIVAL...
THE "FLOWER MASTER" WILL TRADE "FLOWERS" AS EASILY AS CUTTING OFF A TWIG.
AND ...

THOSE WHO WILLINGLY GIVE UP PART OF THEIR OWN FORTUNE TO HOST FLOWER FESTIVALS WHERE FLOWERS AND FLOWER MASTERS MAY GATHER TOGETHER TO COMPETE...
THEY ARE "FLOWER LORDS."
HE WHO STANDS AT THE TOP OF THE FLOWER LORDS EARNS THE TITLE "GREAT TREE."
AND THAT NAME IS PROOF OF HE WHO HOLDS THE GREATEST AUTHORITY IN THIS LAND.
WELL,
AND?
...THAT IS INDEED SO, NAGAYOSHI-SAMA.
THE WEALTHY WILL NOT GATHER AROUND SOMEONE WITH LITTLE POWER OR INFLUENCE.
THE LOGIC IS COMPLETELY NATURAL

WHAT ABOUT THAT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH ME, KUSUNOKI?
FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS,
THE SUMERAGI FLOWER FESTIVALS HAVE DRAWN FEWER AND FEWER GUESTS
?
_WHY?
FROM OLDEN TIMES, THE "GREAT TREE" HAS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH THE SUMERAGI LINE
YES, IT'S A MATTER OF COURSE
HOWEVER!!
YOU ARE THE ELDEST SON OF THE FAMILY THAT RULES THE DISTINGUISHED SUMERAGI FOUNDATION
NAGAYOSHI-SAMA
I KNOW THAT.

...YOU JUST SAID SO YOURSELF, DID YOU NOT...?
THEY WILL NOT GATHER BENEATH THE WEAK.
WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS THAT A POWER GREATER THAN THE SUMERAGI FOUNDATION IS STARTING TO APPEAR.
IF IT GOES ON LIKE THIS, THE SUMERAGI FOUNDATION WILL CONTINUE TO LOSE ITS AUTHORITY!!
IMPOSSIBLE
THE SUMERAGI ARE A NOBLE FAMILY WITH GREAT TRADITION AND HISTORY. OUR AUTHORITY WILL NEVER FALTER.
HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO WAS THAT NOBILITY?
Really...
Ahh...
CARING ABOUT BLOODLINES IS EXTREMELY OLD-FASHIONED!
TRADITIONS ARE GENERALLY OLD
Please look at reality!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN ...!!

FINE, I GIVE UP! ANYWAY!!
flip
Invitation
JUST GO TO THE GREAT TREE'S FLOWER FESTIVAL, JUST ONCE!!
WHAT'S THAT?
AND IT'S PERFECT TIMING! THIS FLOWER FESTIVAL IS THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW!
Huh,?
"RO-KUONIN FOUNDATION"...?
Invitation
Invitation
NEVER HEARD OF THEM
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE ENTIRE WORLD WHO WOULD SAY THAT
THEY'RE A YOUNG GROUP THAT'S BEEN ON THE RISE FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS
THEIR FLOWER FESTIVALS ARE SAID TO BE THE BEST.
A NEWCOMER, HUH.
kraph
WELL, WHATEVER.
I GUESS I CAN TAKE A QUICK LOOK

← ※ Hiro to look down on things he sees for the first time.

THEY HAVE FIFTEEN STAGES WHERE THE GUESTS CAN CHOOSE A FLOWER OF THEIR LIKING..
MY, MY.. HOW SPECTACULAR..!
glance glance

YOU SAY THAT NOW?
THERE'S NO ONE HERE BUT OLD MEN AND PRETTY BOYS...!!
WELL, IT IS A FLOWER FESTIVAL...
BUT THERE ARE QUITE A FEW YOUNG BUSINESS-MEN PRESENT
Like Over There
WELL, OWNING A "FLOWER" IS WHAT'S EXPECTED IN THE BUSINESS WORLD NOW...
...I SEE...
LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE SOME LITTLE ONES, TOO...
WAS THAT A GRADE-SCHOOL-ER?
How little!
NO.
THEY SHOULD ALL BE AT LEAST MIDDLE SCHOOL AGE
The world does not look well upon people with, how-ever, that are too young
MUROMACHI SCHOOL DOESN'T START UNTIL MIDDLE SCHOOL AS WELL
?
MURO-MACHI SCHOOL?
WHAT'S THAT?

OH, THAT'S RIGHT, HE HADN'T EVEN HEARD OF THE ROKUONIN ...
IT'S A FLOWER SCHOOL FOUNDED BY THE ROKU-ONIN.
THIS BUILDING IS ACTUALLY PART OF THE SCHOOL
THE ONE WE'RE IN?
IT'S TRUE THAT THE ROKUONIN HAVE SHOWN EXPLOSIVE GROWTH IN BUSINESS...
BUT THEY HAVE PLACED PARTICULAR IMPOR-TANCE ON THE ROLE OF "FLOWERS" IN POLITE SOCIETY.
TRADITIONALLY, THE FAMOUS FLOWER MASTERS HAVE BEEN THE ONES TO GATHER PEOPLE AROUND THEM THROUGH POWER...
THAT KID...
FROM BEFO-RE...
HUH?
HOWEVER, BY CREATING A SCHOOL TO GATHER AND TRAIN FLOWERS AND THEN CALLING THE FLOWER MASTER TO THEM...
THEY HAVE CREATED A NEW TYPE OF FLOWER FESTIVAL.
GYA AAAA AA?!
OH!
NAGA-YOSHI-SAMA...
THAT IS THE PRESENT LEADER OF THE ROKUONIN FOUNDATION, ROKUONIN HARUOU!!

THOUGH NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
THEY'RE STILL DOING IT!!
OH MY
BUT HOW WONDERFUL HE IS!!
STILL AT IT...
YOU NEVER WOULD THINK HIM TO BE THE SAME AGE AS YOU NAGAYOSHI-SAMA!
THESE "FLO-WERS"
AREN'T THEY JUST THERE TO FOLLOW YOU AROUND AND DO PETTY TASKS AND LOOK PRETTY?!
A sound (out).
I FEEL LIKE THE REST OF THEM ARE ALSO PARTAKING IN COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION
I THOU-GHT THAT "FLO-WERS"
AH!
IT'S FUJI-WAKA!
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING TO BE DANCING!
JINS
THEY WERE NOTHING MORE THAN THAT.
WERE JUST DECORATIVE DOLLS THAT WERE A BIT TALENTED AT SOME ART OR OTHER
THAT WAS ALL THEY WERE.
THAT'S WHAT...

I ALWAYS THOUGHT.

WOW!!
...!
HOW VERY LUCKY WE ARE TODAY!
IT'S RARE TO GET A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF FUJIWAKA DANCING!!
"FUJI-WAKA"...
THIS...
IS A "FLOWER" ...?!
WHAT IS THIS? WHAT IS HE...?!
KUSU-NOKI
WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO BECOME HIS FLOWER MASTER...?!

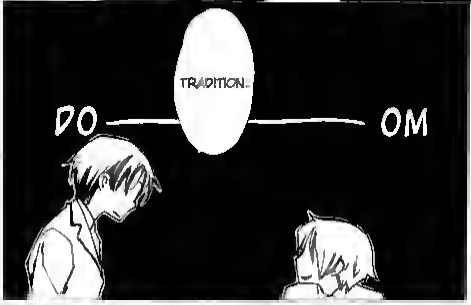
clap
SFX. clash
Hiding
WHAT—
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR SAYING SOMETHING SO OUTRAGEOUS!!
DID YOU LISTEN TO A SINGLE WORD I SAID?!
WERE YOU SAYING SOMETHING?
sigh
?
Don't give up!
ANYWAY,
IF YOU WANT A FLOWER, PICK A DIFFERENT ONE...
I DON'T WANT ANOTHER ONE!
I WANT THAT ONE!
HE...
YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM!
BELONGS TO ROKUONIN HARUKU!!

ROKUONIN.
I THINK I'VE HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE
...HE'S THE ONE SPONSORING TODAY'S FESTIVAL
I can't believe you
HUH?
...?
EVEN THOUGH HE'S THE "GREAT TREE," HE HAS A FLOWER?
MY FATHER NEVER HAD ONE
...YES, SPONSORS USUALLY DO NOT HAVE ANY FLOWERS
HARUOU IS AN UNUSUAL ONE.
THE GREAT TREE DESIRES THE BEST IN EVERYTHING.
BUT PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON WHAT MAKES A GOOD FLOWER, AND SO IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND ONE THAT EVERYONE AGREES IS THE BEST.
The cute little type
The an dreamy-eyed beauty
The sweet girl's type
The traditional beauty
The Oriental beauty
THEREFORE, IT WAS TRADITION THAT THE GREAT TREE NEVER HAD FLOWERS, TO SYMBOLIZE PUBLIC VALUES
HARUOU MUST HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE IN HIS FLOWER, FUJIWAKA.

IN BOTH NAME AND REALITY, HARUOU NOW STANDS AT A ZENITH ABOVE ALL OTHERS
IF YOU ASK ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE, A HUNDRED WILL SAY THAT FUJI-WAKA IS AT THE PINNACLE OF WHAT A FLOWER CAN BE.
WHO IS THAT?!
YOU REALLY...
...AREN'T LISTENING, ARE YOU.
THAT'S ROKUONIN HARUOU.
...DO YOU...
UNDERSTAND THE SITUA-TION NOW?
NAGA-YOSHI-SAMA...

NO. THERE ISN'T.
BOW HIS HEAD TO ME, AND BEG, "HERE, HAVE FUJIWAKA"?
IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN GET HIM TO COME TO ME,
...
Hello? Are you there?
...? NAGA-YOSHI-SAMA...?
PAR-DON?
THE IDEA OF BOWING MY HEAD TO THAT JUST DRIVES ME UP THE WALL.
THE SUMERAGI HAVE FALLEN QUITE FAR...
SUME-RAGI?
SUMERAGI NAGAYOSHI-DONO IS PRESENT.
whisper
WHAT IS IT, HOSO-KAWA?
That would only happen in your dreams!
HARUOU-SAMA.
The Sumeragi Estate
I DID HAPPEN TO HEAR SOMETHING RATHER INTEREST-ING—.
HOW-EVER
IT SEEMS HE ONLY CAME TO SEE THE FESTIVAL
IT IS AS YOU SAY
IT SEEMS HE DIDN'T COME HERE TO BOW HIS HEAD TO US, DID HE
THE YOUNG MASTER NAGA-YOSHI, IS IT.
HE'S THE SUCCES-SOR TO THE SUME-RAGI NAME, ISN'T HE.

I told you, they're richer than us!
THERE ISN'T ANY-THING!!
SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE HIM DROOL!
ISN'T THERE ANY-THING?!
I JUST HAVE TO SCATTER SOME BAIT TO MAKE THEM OFFER UP FUJIWAKA!
BWA HA HA!
SOMETHING THAT THE SUMERAGI HAVE AND THE ROKUJONIN DON'T?!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TRADITION.
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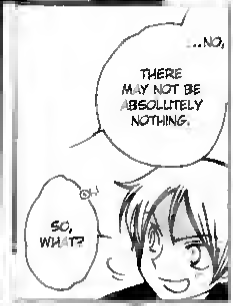
...NO,
THERE MAY NOT BE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.
SO, WHAT?

IF WE CAN'T WIN WITH MONEY, THEN WE HAVE TO BATTLE WITH AGE!
THOUGH PART OF IT HAS BEEN RE-CONSTRUCTED, EVEN THIS MAN-SION IS OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

AHH!
I GET A YAWN?!
YAWN
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING, THEN?!

DOES THIS BUILDING HAVE THAT MUCH VALUE?
WE HAVE MANY PIECES THAT WOULD BE DESIGNATED AS CULTURAL HERITAGE ITEMS IF WE WERE TO RELEASE THEM TO THE PUBLIC.
INCIDENTALLY THE CHAIR YOU ARE NOW SEATED ON IS A RARE ANTIQUE FROM THE MEIJI ERA*.
*T/N 1868-1912
REALLY?
IN ADDITION... THE TEACUP YOU BROKE THE OTHER DAY WAS ALSO A RATHER VALUABLE ITEM.
WOULD THE ROKUONIN REALLY WANT SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I DO NOT THINK THEY NEED TEACUPS...
BUT THEY MAY NEED A GRAND BUILDING...
WHERE THEY CAN INVITE GUESTS AS WITH THE FESTIVAL AT THE SCHOOL THE OTHER DAY
A BUILDING.
IF IT WERE YOU, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU PICK
KUSUNOKI?
EH?
RIGHT NOW, THE ONES THAT ARE LISTED UNDER MY NAME ARE...
THE FLOWER VALLEY MOUNTAIN VILLA, THE SHOAL ESTATE, THE FIVE DYNASTIES GARDEN, THE GREAT INCENSE GARDEN...
I DON'T KNOW.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST DIRECTLY ASK ROKUONIN HIMSELF?
NO WAY.
HE CAN COME TO ME!
WITH FUJI-WAKA!
Don't complain here to me!
DON'T BE UNREASON-ABLE.
PARDON ME,
BUT
A GUEST HAS ARRIVED.
THERE AREN'T ANY GUESTS SCHEDULED FOR TODAY.
WHO CAME WITHOUT AN APPOINT-MENT?
WELL...
A RATHER BEAUTIFUL VISITOR...
HIS NAME..
IS FUJIWAKA-SAMA...
!!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?! IT'S THE REAL DEAL!!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
I WONDER...
.OH!
I'M SORRY FOR COMING SO SUDDENLY!
I'M FROM THE ROKUONIN FOUNDATION
MY NAME IS FUJI.
THUD

LET US HELP !!
IT'S
IT'S QUITE HEAVY
I...
I'M SORRY
AH
clatter
And so I...
REALLY?
IT WAS AMUSING
BUT, WELL
YOU COULD NEVER TELL FROM THE WAY YOU DANCE,
OH, NOT AT ALL! IT'S A BIT OF A RELIEF TO SEE THAT YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN.
I APOLOGIZE...
I'M REALLY SO CARELESS.
I'M SO GLAD..!!

AHHHH!
HE'S SO ADORABLE!!
I WAS AFRAID I HAD GOTTEN MYSELF ON YOUR BAD SIDE BEFORE I COULD EVEN MAKE MY REQUEST.
REQUEST...?
YES.
WOULD YOU PLEASE
PURCHASE ME AS YOUR FLOWER?
AT THE FLOWER FESTIVAL THE OTHER DAY,
I HEARD THAT YOU WISHED TO HAVE ME AS YOUR FLOWER, NAGAYOSHI-SAMA!
WOULD YOU PLEASE CONSIDER IT?!

OKAY, I'M DONE CONSI-D—
CLAP
Ah..!
GASP
That's the second time!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, KUSUNOKI?!
FUJIWAKA-SAMA,
YOU WERE ASKING IF HE WOULD PURCHASE YOU, CORRECT?
WHAT DO YOU DESIRE IN EXCHANGE?
VINE GROVE GARDEN
I WISH IT TO BE SOLD TO ROKUONIN
...VINE GROVE...?
THAT STILL BELONGS TO MY FATHER. I HAVE NO RIGHTS TO .
SO I AM AWARE

BUT IT WILL SOMEDAY FALL INTO YOUR HANDS, NAGAYOSHI-SAMA.
WELL... I AM THE SUCCESSOR, AFTER ALL...
THEREFORE...
IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE NOW.
IF YOU WOULD PROMISE TO ONE DAY PRESENT IT TO ROKUJONIN.
IT IS ENOUGH...
VINE GROVE GARDEN...?
WHAT...?
IS THAT...
HARUJU-DONO'S REQUEST?
WAS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT THAT GARDEN THAT'S SO DESIRABLE...?
...NO.
HOWEVER... HARUJU-SAMA DID SAY...
IT IS MY JUDGMENT.

THOSE DAMN SUMERAGI
THEY REFUSE TO LET GO OF ANYTHING THEY HAVE.
THE NERVE. THEY'RE JUST A RELIC OF THE OLD ORDER, BUT THEY'RE STUBBORN.
IS THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE EVERYTHING IN THE STOCK MARKET CONNECTED TO SUMERAGI PLUMMET ALL AT ONCE?
IF THERE WERE, SOMEONE WOULD HAVE DONE SO ALREADY.
THAT'S TRUE.
Well then
WHY DON'T YOU JUST DIRECTLY ASK SUMERAGI HIMSELF?
NO WAY.
HE CAN COME ASK ME.
WITH THE DEED TO VINE GROVE GARDEN!
Don't be unreasonable.
That conversation ... I've heard it somewhere...
PARDON?
NO, IT'S NOTHING, PLEASE CONTINUE ...

HARUOU-SAMA...
WHY DO YOU SO DESIRE TO HAVE THIS GARDEN...?
I HAD WONDERED ABOUT IT, SO I ASKED HIM.
HE HAD RESEARCHED VINE GROVE GARDEN IN THE PAST AS WELL...
DON'T LAUGH, HOSO-KAWA.
FFF
IT'S JUST TO MY TASTE, THAT'S ALL.
BUT... THE PROPERTY DOESN'T HAVE THAT MUCH VALUE
I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT ROKUONIN HAS MUCH TO GAIN BY GETTING IT...
YES, BUT IT'S NOT FOR PROFES-SIONAL REASONS
IT SEEMS HE TRULY WANTS IT FOR PERSONAL REASONS
JUDGING FROM HIS BEHAVIOR... IT SEEMS THAT HE VERY MUCH DESIRES THAT GARDEN.
THAT'S TWISTED...
SHUT UP, HOSO-KAWA.
IT IS SOME-THING HE IS RATHER ATTACHED TOO
IT IS SOME-THING HE SO MUCH WANTS TO MAKE HIS OWN THAT—
SHUT UP OR I'LL RIP OUT YOUR MUS-TACHE

HE DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING JUST FOR HIMSELF.
HE'S ALWAYS SO FOCUSED ON WORK...
SO YOU WANT TO GET SOMETHING TO GIVE TO HIM...?
YES.
AND...
THE LIFE OF A FLOWER...
IS VERY SHORT...
IN JUST A FEW YEARS, MY VALUE AS A FLOWER WILL FALL.
THERE IS LITTLE I CAN DO ONCE I NO LONGER HAVE VALUE AS A FLOWER.
SO I WILL DO WHAT I CAN AS I AM NOW.
EVEN IF WHAT I CAN DO FOR HIM IS JUST A PROMISE TO BE MADE GOOD UPON IN THE FUTURE...
—WHAT WILL YOU DO...?
WHAT—.
WELL, THE SITUATION SEEMS TO BE GOING AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED—.

IT CERTAINLY IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN...
HE'S HERE BOWING HIS HEAD AND ASKING FOR SOMETHING... WITH FUJIWAKA. ... ALTHOUGH IT'S FUJIWAKA HIMSELF...
NOD HIS master
.....
IT'S HARDLY RARE...
FOR FLOWERS TO BE BOUGHT AND SOLD.
THIS IS JUST A TRADE OF GOODS
ALL I HAVE TO DO ...
IS NOD MY HEAD, AND FUJIWAKA IS MINE...
BUT...
IF HE BECOMES MINE LIKE THIS
WILL I TRULY BE SATISFIED?
ban
9

SFX: WHAM
bam
PLEASE, WAIT!
I WILL INFORM HIM RIGHT AWAY!
bam
PLEASE, SIR—
thud
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT A FUSS...
?!
HA—
HARUOU-SAMA.
YOU!!

AH—
PARDON THE INTER-RUPTION!!
A greeting, of sorts.
HELLO!
I'M ROKUONIN HARUOU!!
GREAT HUGE FOOL!
HELLO, I'M SUME-RAGI ...?!
FUJI-WAKA!!
DON'T DO THINGS WITHOUT MY PERMIS-SION!!
Oh hello. I'm Kusunoki. Pleased to meet you
Hello Im Hasegawa the secretary I'm sorry for all the trouble.
YOU JUST VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!
HONESTLY
...
DAMN IT!
HARUOU-SAMA...
OH.

I SEE...
WISTERIA?
EH?
VINE GROVE GARDEN
GOT ITS NAME FROM THE WISTERIA VINES ON THE PINE TREES IN THE GARDEN
SO YOU ARE ALWAYS ETERNAL AS THE GREEN PINE GROVE
BEAUTIFUL AS THE YOUNG LEAVES OF THE WISTERIA.
SOME POET WROTE A POEM THAT THE GARDEN WAS NAMED AFTER. I BELIEVE THE POEM WAS CALLED "THE GROVE OF THE YOUNG WISTERIA."*

*Translator Note: Fujiwaka means "young wisteria."

THERE'S NO POINT IN TRADING ONE "YOUNG WISTERIA" FOR ANOTHER.
AND I DON'T WANT...
TO GET A FLOWER THAT'S EMPTY ON THE INSIDE
I'M TURNING DOWN THE EXCHANGE
OH? YOU AREN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING?
FLAP
I WAS SURE THAT YOU WOULD PRESENT THE GARDEN TO FUJIWAKA...
NO WAY.
HE SHOULD FIGURE OUT SOMETHING HIMSELF
He means Haruou

He means Fujiwaka
AND I DON'T THINK IT'D MAKE HIM HAPPY IF I JUST GAVE IT TO HIM, EITHER.
YES, THAT MAKES SENSE
WELL, I'LL THINK OF A WAY TO EVENTUALLY TAKE BACK THE STATUS OF GREAT TREE.
GRRRRR
DO YOU REALLY THINK I CAN JUST STAND QUIETLY BY WHEN SOMEONE LIKE THAT—
DARES CALL ME "A RELIC OF THE OLD ORDER"?
I swear I'll beat you down!
Scary
I DON'T THINK I'LL FIND A BETTER FLOWER THAN FUJIWAKA, SO I WON'T TRY TO FIND ANOTHER.
BDMP
I SUPPOSE I'LL DEAL WITH HAVING ONLY YOU FOLLOW ME AROUND
EH?
AND YOUR LOOKS ARE RATHER TO MY TASTE
WHAT WAS THAT?!
WHAT?!
"BDMP"?!
WHAT?!
GYAAA!
ANSWER IF YOU HEARD ME!!
SNAP
YES!!
End

Hanamatsuri

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QC by Kalendel

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Hanamatsuri
Oblique Mirage
2
SOMEONE ONCE TOLD ME...
THAT I AM ALMOST LIKE A MIRAGE
ONE THAT APPEARS ONLY ON THE STAGE,
WHERE DREAM AND REALITY MERGE AND BLEND—
BUT WHEN YOU TRY TO GET CLOSER, IT DISAPPEARS.
BUT...
THE MIRAGE MUST CERTAINLY BE THINKING ...

WHY...
WON'T ANYONE ...
CATCH A HOLD OF ME?
KNOCK
KNOCK
INUOU-DONO.
YOUR NEW FLOWER MASTER HAS ARRIVED.
I'LL GET READY.
FUJI-WAKA.
I'M NOT SURE I SHOULD DO THIS. .

IT'S ALL RIGHT.
HE IS A WONDERFUL FLOWER MASTER.
PLEASE TRUST ME AND HARUOLI-SAMA.
YOUR NEW FLOWER MASTER'S NAME IS OUMI-SAMA...
OUMI HIROYA-SAMA...

THERE IS A PASTIME OF THE WEALTHY KNOWN AS THE "FLOWER CHOICE."

YOUTH WHO MASTER AN ART ARE CALLED FLOWERS,
AND THOSE WHO PURCHASE THEM BECOME FLOWER MASTERS
UNTIL RECENTLY, THE STATUS OF FLOWERS WAS QUITE LOW
AND PERFECTING AN ART COSTS MONEY
THE RELATION-SHIP BETWEEN FLOWER AND FLOWER MASTER WAS BASED ON THE WILLINGNESS TO DO ANYTHING TO RECEIVE MONEY
IN SHORT, IT WAS A VULGAR HOBBY
IT IS AS YOU GUESS
THIS SCHOOL WAS FOUNDED TO IMPROVE THAT STATUS
AND BECAME LIKE VALUABLE JEWELS, AN ADORNMENT FOR THEIR FLOWER MASTERS IN THE SOCIAL WORLD.
THE FLOWERS WERE GIVEN TOP-CLASS EDUCA-TION AND ETIQUETTE TRAINING ...
THERE-FORE...
THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT A HIGHER PRICE MAKES A BETTER FLOWER FOR THE MASTER
THAT MAY BE...
HOW-EVER...
THE FLOWER MASTER'S SENSE OF BEAUTY AND AESTHETICS IS REFLECTED IN THE FLOWER.
ISN'T THE PRICE THIS TIME A BIT TOO LOW?

IS THAT SO?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW WELL MYSELF
BUT THE ONLY ONE WHO MADE AN OFFER TO BE HIS FLOWER MASTER WAS YOU, OUMI-SAMA.
PERHAPS THE GUESTS DID NOT TAKE MUCH NOTICE OF HIM.
...IS THAT SO?
I did no mae.
IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DANCE.
HE JUST ...
LET HIS HANDS FLOW FROM RIGHT TO LEFT...
AND EVERY-ONE THERE ...
SAW A SHOWER OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
HIM?
HIS NAME IS INUOU.

I THOUGHT THAT IT WAS A STRANGE NAME
FOR SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SHOWER OF PETALS...
INUOU*
OUMI-SAMA
DOES HE APPEAL TO YOU?
*T/N: "Inuou" means "Dog King."
TO BE CALLED A KING OF BEASTS...
THOUGH NOT A BEAST, HIS NAME IS INDEED WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "DOG" AND "KING."
IS HE SAYING THAT THIS FLOWER IS MAD...?
...WHAT DOES HE MEAN...?
I just heard something scary
...?
OUMI-SAMA,
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY FOR THE WAIT
DON'T TELL ME THAT'S WHY HE WAS SO CHEAP...
I'll go check
clatter
OH, IT SEEMS THAT INUOU HAD MADE HIS FINAL PREPARATIONS
THOSE WHO CANNOT DISTINGUISH ILLUSION FROM REALITY HAVE LONG BEEN CALLED "MAD." A WORD WRITTEN BY COMBINING THOSE TWO CHARACTERS.
PARDON?

OR COULD IT BE...
THIS IS INUOU.
YOUR FLOWER.
I THOUGHT
THAT HE WAS LIKE A CHERRY BLOSSOM AFTER THE RAIN.
THAT HAD BEEN KNOCKED TO THE GROUND AND CRUSHED UNDER-FOOT.
FSSH

RAIN...
NOTHING BUT RAIN LATELY...
Thud
WHAT WAS THAT...?
FROM OVER HERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON...
Jolt
INUOU?!
Ah!
I-
Ah!
I'M SORR..!
PAIL
PAIL
...
AGAIN...
INUOU...
I
I'm sor...
IT'S BEEN ONE MONTH SINCE INUOU CAME HERE.
DIDN'T I ALREADY TELL YOU?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO HELP WITH HOUSE-WORK.

AND THERE ARE MANY THINGS ABOUT HIM I HAVE COME TO KNOW.
FIRSTLY, THAT HE'S HORRIBLY CLUMSY.
HOW CAN HE FALL IN A PLACE WHERE THERE'S NOTHING TO TRIP OVER. .?
BUT DESPITE BEING CLUMSY, HE WANTS TO HELP.
WELL, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO DO. .
AND ASIDE FROM THAT,
HE SPENDS ALL HIS TIME LOOKING AT SOMETHING.
tm
mack
THOUGH I DON'T.
pitter
patter.
THINK THERE'S ANYTHING TO LOOK AT. .
AND YET,
HIS BEAUTY AS HE DANCES ON THE STAGE HASN'T CHANGED ONE BIT.

I SEE.
OH.
THIS...
IS RAIN?
I THOUGHT THAT THIS FLOWER
THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.
MUST HAVE NOTHING IN HIS HEAD BUT DANCING
Ooh!
GIVE IT HERE
PLUCK
Why don't you hold it by the handles?
AH—
BUT—
YOU REALLY CAN'T DO ANYTHING BUT DANCE, CAN YOU...
Flush
SLUMP
Again?
I'm sorry
HE'S ALWAYS CURLING UP.
AND FINALLY ...
YOU...
YOU'RE LIKE A SLUG'S EYES.
The best joke he can come up with.

Flinch
I REALIZED THAT THIS FLOWER...
.....
IS, FOR SOME REASON, AFRAID OF ME.
OH! HIROYA!

chatter
chatter
What is it?
Sullen as always!
YOU REALLY DID COME! WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT HOW YOU WERE SURE TO COME...
? WHAT, IS IT BAD FOR ME TO COME TO A FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY PARTY?
YOU'RE THE FLOWER MASTER OF THE "OBLIQUE MIRAGE" NOW, AREN'T YOU?
I KNEW YOU'D COME WITH YOUR FLOWER TO SHOW HIM OFF!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN!
OBLIQUE?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
OH?
DIDN'T YOU BECOME INUOU'S FLOWER MASTER?
I DID BECOME INUOU'S FLOWER MASTER
What—!
Yeah.
SEE, I KNEW IT!
?? WHAT, IS HE A FAMOUS FLOWER?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
WHO IS THE MASTER DANCER KNOWN AS THE "OBLIQUE MIRAGE," RIGHT?!
HIS FORM AS HE DANCES ON THE STAGE IS SO BEAUTIFUL...
THAT THOSE WHO WATCH BECOME INCAPABLE OF DISTINGUISHING ILLUSION FROM REALITY...
AND REACH OUT THEIR HANDS TO MAKE HIM THEIR OWN
BUT THEY SAY THAT THE MOMENT YOU TRY TO GET CLOSE, HE VANISHES LIKE A MIRAGE!
Amazing!
Wow!
They're sure fired up...

CANNOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ILLUSION AND REALITY..
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT HAVE HEARD THAT SOMEWHERE...
Hmm
WOW! I WANNA SEE HIM!!
You didn't wanna him?
YOU BUY FLOWERS TO BRING THEM PLACES DON'T YOU!?
IDIOT! WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING HIM WITH YOU?
OH...
...YEAH, SORRY...
BUT WAIT—
IS IT SAFE TO BRING THAT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE..?
That
Ahh!
I don't wanna be seen.
WELL THEN,
NOW DOES THIS SOUND?!
—THE RAIN—
IT STOPPED
...

THAT TIME...
IT'S ALL RIGHT
I WON'T DO ANYTHING
SO PLEASE →
DON'T
BE SO AFRAID
A hand without anywhere to go
PEOPLE ALWAYS TELL ME I SCARE THEM WITH MY SULLEN LOOK, BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT
I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO GET USED TO IT
!!
.....
HE'S AN INTERESTING PERSON
JUST LIKE THIS...

WOW...!
IT'S ABOUT TIME...
FOR HIM TO COME HOME, I THINK...
SHOULD I PERFORM FOR HIM TODAY?
WHAT
I showed him rain the other day, so
OH!!
THERE HE IS!!
HEY, THAT'S HIM, RIGHT?
WHAT?
THE OBLIQUE MIRAGE!!
HEY, WAIT!!
HUH? THAT'S REALLY HIM?
HE LOOKS TOO NORMAL
chatter
chatter
I TOLD YOU NOT TO GO INSIDE!!
ISN'T HE SUPPOSED TO BE MORE IMPRESSIVE?
I TOLD YOU!
I SAID TO WAIT UNTIL THE STAGE HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR...
WHAT?!
AH!!

Splish
huff
HE RAN AWAY.
huff
WHAT IS THIS?!
THIS ISN'T THE FLOWER I BOUGHT!
I LOVE ...
BEING ON THE STAGE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FLOWER I SAW ON THE STAGE?!
EVEN SOMEONE AS CLUMSY AND USELESS AS I AM...
CAN BECOME A FLOWER OR A BIRD OR ANYTHING.
I CAN MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY.
BUT...

AND WHILE I RECEIVED PRAISE AND CHEERS WHILE ON THE STAGE...
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE WITHOUT EVER LEAVING THE STAGE.
I THOUGHT I'D FIND HIM RIGHT AWAY...
... DAMN IT
WHERE DID HE GO...?
HE ISN'T HERE...
WAS HE SO DESPERATE TO ESCAPE...??
FROM WHAT?
WAS IT BECAUSE THERE WERE SO MANY PEOPLE THERE?
THAT'S RIDICULOUS...
YOU'RE THE FLOWER MASTER OF THE "OBLIQUE MIRAGE" NOW, AREN'T YOU?
THE MOMENT I STEP OFF THE STAGE AND RETURN TO EARTH,
INUOU!
IT ALL VANISHES, AN ILLUSION LIKE A MIRAGE.
THE GUESTS DID NOT TAKE MUCH NOTICE OF HIM...
.....

WHAT'S GOING ON...?
THAT WAS INUOU.
NOT TOO LONG AGO,
THERE WAS A DANCER WHO DANCED AN ANGEL'S DANCE.
IT WAS A TIME WHEN THE STATUS OF FLOWERS WAS STILL QUITE LOW.
TALENT AND ART WERE NOT AN ISSUE.
IT WAS A TIME WHEN THE ONLY THING OF IMPORTANCE TO A FLOWER WAS BEAUTY.
SEEING HIM DANCE WAS LIKE SEEING A FANTASTICAL ANGEL DESCEND TO EARTH,
AND EVERY FLOWER MASTER WAS ENRAPTURED BY THE SIGHT.

THE OBLIQUE IS THE POINT WHERE ILLUSION AND REALITY SLANT AND OVERLAP.

THAT IS TO SAY, IT IS THE WORLD ON THE STAGE.

THE FLOWER MASTERS GREEDILY VIED WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE OBLIQUE ANGEL,
AND IN THE MADNESS, HIS PRICE ROSE FURIOUSLY.
AND WHEN A FLOWER MASTER HAD FINALLY OBTAINED THE ANGEL AND BROUGHT HIM DOWN TO EARTH...

THE ANGEL WAS NOTHING MORE...
THAN A TIMID, CLUMSY CHILD.
RUMORS SAY THAT HE WAS SOLD FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY PRICE
I DON'T THINK HIS LOOKS ARE DISAPPOINTINGLY BAD
Huh?
YES, HE IS SUPPOSED TO BE QUITE BEAUTIFUL.
HOWEVER, TO THOSE WHOSE HEARTS WERE STOLEN AWAY BY THE ILLUSIONARY ANGEL
THE DIFFERENCE WAS SOMETHING UNFORGIVABLE
THE MORE SERIOUS ONE IS ABOUT AN ILLUSION,
THE MORE EXTREME THE DIFFERENCE APPEARS TO BE,
AND THE MORE THE CHILD LEFT BEHIND WAS BLAMED
THE MORE THE ANGEL'S BEAUTY VANISHED.
THAT'S ...
ONLY TO BE EXPECTED ...
IF INUOU IS HURT, THEN OF COURSE THE ILLUSION UPON THE STAGE WOULD BE HURT AS WELL.
I AM VERY SORRY FOR NOT TELLING YOU ALL OF THIS EARLIER.

I APPRECIATE IT
I GOT TO HAVE HIM AT A GOOD PRICE
...
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF INUOU-DONO
BUT...
NO IT'S FINE
I MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME THING IF I'D KNOWN
CREAK
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WERE
I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU
I'M SORRY

HE VANISHED!
HE REALLY IS A NINJA!
Amazing!
Wow!
They're all psyched
INTERESTING IN ITS OWN RIGHT. EVERYONE SEEMED SATISFIED
Hmm
NO! I SHOULD APOLOGIZE FOR FLEEING LIKE THAT...
NO THAT WAS ACTUALLY...
I'M SORRY FOR SURPRISING YOU LIKE THAT TODAY
That's cruel
Eek!
WHY DO YOU NOT REPRIMAND ME...?
HIROYA-SAMA.
I... AM INCOMPETENT AT EVERYTHING EXCEPT DANCING... AND I'M CLUMSY
AND I'M A POOR SPEAKER SO I CAN'T BE YOUR CONVERSATION PARTNER, EITHER.
I'M SORRY THAT I DON'T HAVE ANY GREAT MOVING ANSWER. BUT YOUR PRICE WAS REALLY LOW
IT WAS THE KIND OF PRICE YOU WOULD BE ENRAGED TO HEAR.
.....
BUT THAT'S...
AND BESIDES...
?
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU WERE SO CHEAP.
EH?
...TO BE FRANK,

SO FROM THE BEGINNING, YOU WERE EXPECTING A FAULTY FLOWER WHEN YOU PLANNED ON PURCHASING...?
WELL, I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY THAT.
BUT I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO REMAINED AFTER THE PRICE WAS ANNOUNCED
THE CHAIRMAN OR WHOEVER IS QUITE THE CHARLATAN
BUT APPARENTLY QUITE A FEW PEOPLE WERE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING YOU
I ONLY HEARD ABOUT THIS AFTER THE FACT.
WELL, WITH A PRICE LIKE THAT, IT'S ONLY NATURAL TO SUSPECT THAT THE PRODUCT IS FLAWED OR FAKE
THOUGH REALLY
I DIDN'T CARE WHAT FLAWS OR DEFECTS THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
THE RAIN OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS THAT NIGHT WAS TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR ME TO CARE
IT MIGHT ACTUALLY BE...
THAT I DIDN'T CARE WHAT YOU WERE LIKE OFF THE STAGE

BUT...
IF I WERE TO LIST YOUR FLAWS,
THEY'RE THINGS LIKE DOING NOTHING ALL DAY,
HMM
OR TRIPPING OVER ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, THINGS OF THAT ORDER
JUST WHEN I THINK THAT YOU HAVE NOTHING ON YOUR MIND BUT DANCING,
YOU DO SOMETHING TO SHOW THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY UNEXPECTEDLY CONCERNED ABOUT THINGS BEYOND THE STAGE.
AND BESIDES
THOSE ARE ALL...
CONNECTED TO YOUR DANCING, AREN'T THEY?
THAT'S WHY...
YES. THAT'S RIGHT
RATHER THAN SEEING YOU ON THE STAGE,
SEEING YOU HERE, ON THE EARTH, IS MUCH MORE INTERESTING.

Gyaaaaah...
Whoa
Buzz
BU—
BUT I...
I REALLY CAN'T DO ANYTHING—
YOU'RE STILL SAYING THAT?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT I NEVER EXPECTED ANYTHING FROM YOU?
BUT...
THEN.
AT LEAST PROMISE ME THIS
ALL RIGHT?
ONLY WHEN YOU'RE ON THE STAGE...
ARE YOU TO BE THE GREATEST FLOWER.
MAKE EVERYONE WATCHING PRAISE YOU AS THE FINEST OBLIQUE MIRAGE
I WILL NOT CHASE AN ILLUSION.
SO DON'T TRY TO VANISH AWAY FROM ME

A MIRAGE ...
IS FOR EVERYONE BUT ITS MASTER TO PURSUE.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
INUOU.
...YES,
MY FLOWER MASTER ...!
HARUOU-SAMA.

WHAT IS IT?
HAVE YOU HEARD
THE RUMORS ABOUT OUMI-SAMA?
NO
rustle
IT IS SAID THAT THE OBLIQUE MIRAGE'S FLOWER MASTER...
WILL NEVER BRING HIS FLOWER OUT IN PUBLIC WITH HIM.
THOSE WHO THOUGHT IT CURIOUS QUES-TIONED HIM.
WHY, THEY ASKED, DO YOU NOT BRING SUCH A MARVEL-OUS FLOWER WITH YOU?
IF YOU DID, SURELY EVERYONE WOULD GAZE AT YOU IN ENVY.
WHAT A STRANGE THING TO SAY.
HE IS THE OBLIQUE MIRAGE.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO BRING HIM AND HIS STAGE EVERYWHERE I GO.
AND...

IF YOU WISH TO VERIFY THE WORTH OF THE FLOWER,
JUST ONCE WATCH HIM UPON THE STAGE.
THERE IS NO NEED TO TAKE HIM WITH ME WHEREVER I GO
EVEN IF HE IS NOT BY MY SIDE,
HE IS STILL ADMIRABLY FULFILLING HIS DUTY AS A FLOWER
WELL YOU CAN PHRASE IT HOW-EVER YOU LIKE
OH BUT FROM THE MOMENT IT WAS DECIDED THAT HE WOULD MAKE THE PURCHASE AT THAT PRICE
OUMI-SAMA HAS BEEN MORE THAN PROVEN TO HAVE FINE EYES FOR THIS SORT OF THING!
Hmph.
THE FIRST TIME I HEARD THAT PRICE,
EVEN I THOUGHT THAT YOU HAD FINALLY LOST YOUR MIND, HARUOU-SAMA.
Did you
WELL IT'S OBVIOUS WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF HE HAD PACKED OUT THERE
I WOULDN'T HAVE ENTRUSTED INUOU TO HIM IF HE HADN'T DONE AT LEAST THAT MUCH
WHAT
...NO. NOTHING

"EVEN THIS IS ON THE EXPENSIVE SIDE."
IS WHAT YOU SAID, IF I RECALL CORRECTLY
Are you sure?
IT'S JUST THAT, WHEN I ASKED IF YOU WERE SURE ABOUT THE PRICE.
"A FLOWER WHO IS AFRAID OF HIS FLOWER MASTER IS NO BETTER THAN GARBAGE."
...I DON'T RECALL ANYTHING OF THE SORT
OH? IS THAT SO?
YOU ARE QUITE THE FINE CHAIRMAN.
HOWEVER YOU ARE NOT A SKILLED LIAR.
IF YOU ARE WORRIED, THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST HONESTLY ADMIT...
I SAID THAT I DON'T RECALL ANYTHING OF THE SORT
Relax.
WHAT A FUNNY PERSON ...
So you'll insist on saying that?
Hmph
MEAN WHILE, AT THE OUMI RESIDENCE...
HOW FUNNY ...
Dazed
How
Wow When will he notice?
Today is another peaceful day

End

Hanamatsuri

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IT HAPPENED A FEW YEARS AGO!
THERE IS...
NOTHING MORE FOR ME TO TEACH YOU, KOKUCHOU-KUN.
NO ONE COULD POSSIBLY MATCH YOUR ARTISTIC SKILL NOW.
...THANK YOU.
BUT...
...
MASTER...?
?
HOW CAN I PUT THIS. WELL...
AREN'T YOU...
A LITTLE BIT...
WELL...
PLAIN...TO BE A FLOWER?
Shock
PLAIN?!

Hanamatsuri
The Seed of the Single-Petaled Flower
YOU CANNOT BECOME A FLOWER WITH THAT ALONE.
NO MATTER HOW WELL YOU CAN FOLLOW THE MANUAL
Hmm
PARDON?
DO YOU MEAN MY LOOKS?
YOUR LOOKS, OR PERHAPS... YOUR ATMOSPHERE
ATMOSPHERE?
AND AS AN ARTIST, YOU ARE SKILLED, BUT PLAIN, I SUPPOSE...
???
WHAT I MEAN IS...
YOU DO NOT HAVE THE APPEAL THAT DRAWS PEOPLE TO YOU.

THERE IS A PASTIME OF THE WEALTHY KNOWN AS THE "FLOWER CHOICE."
THE WEALTHY BECOME FLOWER MASTERS,
PATRONS OF YOUTHS KNOWN AS "FLOWERS."
IT IS A GAME WHERE FLOWERS COMPETE TO PROVE THEIR VALUE,
AND ALSO ONE WHERE MASTERS COMPETE TO DRAW THE MOST ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES.
THOUGH THE MOUNTAIN'S JAPANESE YELLOW ROSE BLOOMS WITH A GREAT MANY PETALS,
AND THEREFORE...
MUCH TO MY SORROW IT DOES NOT HAVE A SINGLE SEED
Translator note: a poem written by Imperial Prince Kaneakira (914-987).
JUST AS MY INSTRUCTOR HAD PREDICTED SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE, I WENT UNSOLD...
BEING ONLY PRETTY ISN'T EVERYTHING.
OH, SOMEONE, ANYONE...
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S AN IDIOT, OR A MORON, OR A MADMAN, JUST SOMEONE, ANYONE...
THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL THE BIAS OF THE UGLY.
oh, how-ever-ev-er.
HOW EMPTY LIFE IS...
mutter mutter
pitter patter

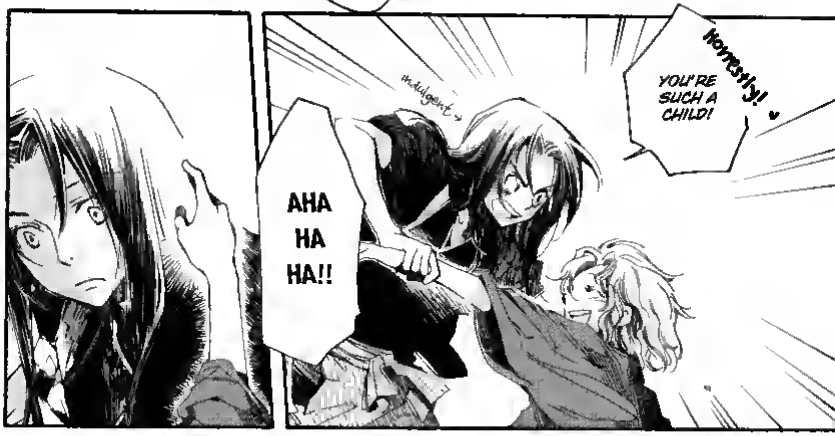
KOKU-CHOU-DONO!!
WON'T ANYONE BECOME MY FLOWER MASTER?
...WHAT, IT'S JUST YOU, FUJI-WAKA
DID YOU FIND A FLOWER MASTER OR SOME-THING?
EH?
IF YOU ALREADY KNOW, THEN PLEASE HURRY!
WHAT, YOU KNEW?!
HUH?
YOUR FLOWER MASTER IS WAITING!
PLEASE, HURRY TO YOUR WORK!
...HUH?
A LOT OF THINGS FLASHED THROUGH MY MIND— LIKE, "IS HE AN IDIOT OR A MORON?" AND "THIS IS A JOKE, RIGHT?" AND "WHY NOW, WHEN THERE ARE NO FLOWER FESTIVALS?"
LET'S JUST SAY THERE WERE A LOT OF THINGS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE.
CLAP
BUT I LEAPT STRAIGHT TO MY FEET IN JOY AND DASHED TO SEE MY MASTER...

I'M AKAMATSU, NICE TO MEET YOU!
OH, YES, WONDERFUL!
BWA HA HA!!
SO YOU'RE KOKUCHOU-KUN, ARE YOU?!
AND I IMMEDIATELY REGRETTED IT.
...HE'S WEARING A PINK BOW TIE ...
THA—
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR CHOOSING ME, FLOWER MA'S—
OH,
WELL, IT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER WHO IT WAS.
WOW I DON'T EVEN
AND BESIDES, YOUR FLOWER MASTER ISN'T ME.
YOUR MASTER IS MY PET YUKI-CHAN.
THIS IS THE WORST!!
WHAT?!
WHAT ?!
DEAR GOD...
WELL, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU, SO COME WITH ME.
I SAID THAT I DIDN'T CARE IF IT WAS AN IDIOT OR A MORON OR A MADMAN, BUT...
WHAT KIND OF TRIAL ARE YOU PUTTING ME THROUGH, TO GIVE ME A FLOWER MASTER THAT IS AN IDIOT, A MORON, A MADMAN, AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, NOT EVEN HUMAN?
MY PARENTS WOULD WEEP...
Look!
WE'RE HERE!

SO BRIGHT ...
YUKI!
WERE YOU LONELY?
I BROUGHT YOU A FRIEND TO PLAY WITH
SEE?
KOKU-CHOU-KUN
THIS... IS YOUR FLOWER MASTER, YUKI.
ADORABLE, ISN'T HE?
AND THAT ...

WAS MY SUDDEN, FORCE-FUL MEET-ING ..
WITH MY MASTER, YUKI.
YUKI.
I'LL WIPE YOU DOWN,
SO PLEASE SIT UP PROPER-LY.
YOU CAN WIPE ME EVEN WHEN I'M LYING DOWN.
snap
NO, I CAN'T.

...
GRAB MY HAND!
HERE
PULL ME UP
flop


indulgent
AHA HA HA!!
YOU'RE SUCH A CHILD!
NOTICE!!

I CAN'T WIPE YOU DOWN IF YOU CLING TO ME LIKE THAT!
STOP IT
YES, YOU CAN
yank
NO I CAN'T!
SQUEEZE
UGH...

YUKI ...
IS ACTUALLY QUITE DIFFERENT FROM MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF HIM.
HE'S SO CHEERFUL.
HE'S EVEN SINGING
BUT...
... YOU'RE TOO THIN
THERE'S NO HELPING IT.
I'M GOING TO DIE SOON, ANYWAY.
JUST LIKE HIS NAME,*
YUKI HAS PURE WHITE HAIR AND PURE WHITE SKIN...
I'VE HEARD THAT ALBINOS ARE GENERALLY WEAK,
BUT SEEING HOW YOU HAVE THE ENERGY TO FOOL AROUND LIKE YOU DO, I THINK YOU'LL BE FINE
EHEH
YOU THINK SO?
HEY, KOKUCHOU.

*Translator Note: "Yuki" means "snow"

THE FACT THAT YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING...
MEANS THAT THE RED ON MY BACK IS STILL THERE, RIGHT?
...YES, THAT'S TRUE
THE MARKS ARE STILL THERE
THEY STAYED THE WHOLE WEEK...
WELL, I'LL ONLY GET THEM AGAIN TOMORROW.
THIS CONTRACT ...
COMES WITH A FEW RULES...
I TAKE CARE OF HIM FROM MONDAY TO SATURDAY.
I MUST NEVER SLEEP IN THE SAME ROOM AS HIM.
I MUST NOT LET YUKI LEAVE THE ROOM.
I THINK YOU ALREADY KNOW,
BUT THE REASON I WENT OUT AND GOT A "FLOWER"...
IS BECAUSE I WANT A CARETAKER WHO CAN EXERCISE PROPER MODERATION AND FORMALITY.

SO MAKE SURE YOU NEVER LAY A FINGER ON YUKI
...AHA HA HA...
I'M VERY BUSY, SO I'LL BE ASK-ING YOU TO TAKE CARE OF HIM,
AND...
BUT I HAVE SOME FREE TIME ON THE WEEKENDS, SO I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM THEN
SO, DURING THAT TIME,
YOU CAN JUST GO OUT SOME-WHERE
"YOU..."
ew! pervert sex maniac How can you a
about something ke that broad daylight?!
Why don't you try to exercise some
moderation, you freak! Idiot! Jerk!
BUT ...
FOR ALL THAT I'VE BASHED HIM WITH EVERY-THING I HAVE...
silently
Why am I so use-less?
IT HASN'T CHANGED THE ACTUAL SITUATION AT ALL...
... THE TWO OF US ...

EVEN THOUGH I'M THE "FLOWER," I DON'T HAVE THE BEAUTY A "FLOWER" SHOULD HAVE...
WERE, TECHNICALLY, "FLOWER" AND "FLOWER MASTER," BUT...
INSTEAD, YUKI HAS THE BEAUTY, AND THAT PERVERT AKAMATSU HAS THE POWER.
AND EVEN THOUGH YUKI'S THE "FLOWER MASTER," HE DOESN'T HAVE THE POWER A "FLOWER MASTER" SHOULD HAVE.
THEN... WHAT DO I HAVE...?
HEY
PLAY YOUR FLUTE FOR ME.
I DON'T MIND.
I'm too rain
BUT I'LL ONLY BORE YOU
IT'S FINE I LIKE HOW IT SOUNDS.
IT SOUNDS LIKE A CRY
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PLAY THAT FLUTE, KOKUCHOU?
...YES.
BUT I THINK ANYONE WITH THE PROPER SKILLS COULD PLAY IT...
suppose
YOU'RE SO SILLY, KOKUCHOU

THE REASON YOU'RE SO AMAZING...
IS BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS "THE PROPER SKILLS"!
I LIKE HOW THAT FLUTE SOUNDS,
SO YOU NEED TO BE HERE TO PLAY IT FOR ME, RIGHT?
...THAT IS...
YOU LIKE THIS FLUTE?
I LIKE HOW IT SOUNDS.
...? ISN'T IT THE SAME THING?
NO, IT'S NOT.
OH, BUT...
WHAT I LIKE THE BEST...
IS HOW YOU PLAY IT FOR ME.

I LOVE IT.
NO MATTER HOW WE WISH AND HOPE,
AKAMATSU-DONO HOLDS ALL THE POWER...
AND IF WE BREAK THE RULES, WE WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO SEE EACH OTHER.
ON THE WEEKEND, I HELP YUKI PREPARE,
AND THEN I RETURN TO THE SCHOOL.
GOODBYE, YUKI.
I'LL BE BACK LATER.

SEE YOU LATER.
ALL RIGHT.
AND THIS...
HAS GONE ON FOR THREE MONTHS.
THERE ISN'T ANYTHING THE SCHOOL CAN DO.
AKAMATSU-DONO IS A RATHER POWERFUL FIGURE.
THE SCHOOL CAN INTERVENE IN PROBLEMS BETWEEN "FLOWERS" AND THEIR "FLOWER MASTERS," BUT...
...I FIGURED...
AND YUKI ISN'T A "FLOWER"...
...I'M SORRY I COULDN'T HELP.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR FUJIWAKA.
slump

WHAT?
BY THE WAY, THAT PINK BOW TIE...
YOU MEAN AKAMATSU-SAMA?
THE OTHER DAY, WHEN WE PASSED EACH OTHER IN THE MANSION, HE REALLY GLARED AT ME
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT...?
ISN'T THAT...
BECAUSE HE'S UPSET THAT SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO HIM...
IS GROWING FOND OF SOMEONE ELSE?
HUH?!
WHO COULD BE FOND OF A MASTER WHO ONLY GOES TO SEE HIM ON THE WEEKENDS!
EVEN STILL, MASTERS WANT TO BE LOVED
EVEN A DOG PREFERS THE PERSON WHO FEEDS IT!!
Hmph!
..
BUT...
IT IS WORRYING
BECAUSE THE ONE HE'S TAKING OUT HIS FRUSTRATION ON IS PROBABLY YUKI-DONO
TAKE CARE NOT TO DO ANYTHING IMPRUDENT...
IS...
WHAT HE SAID, BUT...
YUKI...
.....
I'LL...
WIPE MYSELF DOWN LATER...
I CAN'T GET UP RIGHT NOW...

THEN PLEASE AT LEAST EAT SOMETHING.
I DON'T WANT TO I FEEL SICK.
YUKI.
HEY, KOKU-CHOU.
WHY DON'T YOU... CHANGE YOUR NAME?
PARDON?
I DON'T THINK THE NAME "KOKUCHOU"* SUITS YOU AT ALL.
YOUR HAIR ISN'T AS SOFT AS SABLE FUR,
AND YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE MUCH OF A MEAT-EATER, EITHER.
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT ...?
"YAMABUKI."
*Translator note: "Kokuchou" means "black sable" The sable is an animal related to the weasel
?
A NAME FOR YOU
"YAMA-BUKI."
I JUST FELT LIKE IT!
HUH?!
"YAMA-BUKI" ...?
AND WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

MUCH TO MY SORROW,
IT DOES NOT HAVE A SINGLE SEED.
I FELT LIKE...
THAT NAME FIT YUKI MUCH MORE THAN IT FIT ME, BUT...
THAT'S YOUR NAME
YAMABUKI.
T/N. "Yamabuki" literally means "mountain breeze" and is the Japanese name of the Japanese yellow rose.
THOUGH THE MOUNTAIN'S JAPANESE YELLOW ROSE BLOOMS WITH A GREAT MANY PETALS
THAT'S RIGHT. THE FLOWER GETS ITS NAME FROM HOW IT SWAYS IN THE MOUNTAIN BREEZE.
"YAMABUKI"... MEANING "MOUNTAIN BREEZE," CORRECT?
EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE THE COLOR OF GOLD,
THEY CAN'T BUY A WAY OUT OF THE TRAP THEY'RE STUCK IN
YAMABUKI, THE YELLOW ROSE...
HEY
PLAY YOUR FLUTE FOR ME?

WHY DO YOU LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS FLUTE SO MUCH?
I TOLD YOU ALREADY, DIDN'T I?
BECAUSE IT SOUNDS LIKE A CRY
DO YOU LIKE THE SOUND OF CRYING?
NO.
I LIKE IT BECAUSE I CAN ONLY HEAR IT WHEN I'M WITH YOU.

I DIDN'T...

IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING MAKING MY HEART CLENCH.

SEE,

FWOOSH, IT GOES.

SO I NEVER REALIZED.

AND I WAS MORE AFRAID THAT IF I GOT TOO INVOLVED AND BROKE THE "RULES," WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.

I THOUGHT THAT THE "RULES" WERE SOMETHING I WAS MEANT TO DEFEND,

LOOK TOO DEEPLY INTO THE MEANING OF THOSE WORDS.

HUH?
WHA
BUT..
DID I..
NO, YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING
IT SAYS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME EVEN WHEN THE WEEKEND ENDS
I SAID, A MESSENGER FROM THE AKAMATSU FAMILY CAME
WHILE YOUR HONORABLE FLOWER MASTER.. WAS ENTERTAINING HIS MASTER
HE SAID YOUR NAME
APPARENTLY, THAT WAS ALL.
YOU DID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING WRONG, BUT...
EVEN IF IT'S WRITTEN LIKE THIS, IF THE FLOWER MASTER HAS SIGNED, THEN WE HAVE TO AGREE TO YOUR DISMISSAL
flutter
JUST WHO...
THOSE CRIES BELONGED TO.
...WHAT?

THERE'S NO WAY, PINK HAD TO HAVE FORCED HIM...
Yuki
THIS..
THAT MAY BE
BUT THE SCHOOL CAN'T INTERFERE ANY MORE THAN..
BAM
tremble tremble
..YOU
YOU'RE THE "GREAT TREE," AREN'T YOU..?
YOU'VE GOT MORE POWER THAN AKAMATSU.
CAN'T YOU DRAG ONE LITTLE YUKI OUT OF THERE?!
NO. I CAN'T.
STRAIGHT AWAY.
THINK ABOUT IT A LITTLE !!
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT MORE THAN YOU.
YEAH, RIGHT!!

FWIP
MMPH!
...?!
WHA—
IT'S A FLOOR PLAN OF YUKI'S BEDROOM
A LOT OF MONEY WENT INTO MAKING IT.
THAT'S QUITE SOME FIXATION THERE, TO SPEND THIS MUCH MONEY TURNING A BED INTO A CAGE.
OF COURSE HE'S GOING TO BE UPSET WHEN HIS PET WAGS HIS TAIL FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
WHAT
THIS MACHINE..
IN SHORT, IT'S LIKE KEEPING A DEEP-SEA FISH AS A PET.
YOU NEED A SPECIAL TYPE OF TANK,
AND IF IT LEAVES THAT ROOM, IT WON'T SURVIVE.
WHAT?!
IT WON'T
HUH?
IF YOU TAKE HIM OUT OF THERE, HE'LL DIE.

UNFORTU-
NATELY, I CAN'T
TELL WHAT KIND
OF EQUIPMENT
THIS IS JUST
FROM THIS
FLOOR PLAN.
BASICALLY,
YOU CAN'T
CARELESSLY
TAKE HIM
OUTSIDE OR
HE'LL DIE.
AND HE'S
A VERY
EXPENSIVE,
VERY VALU-
ABLE PET
HE
MIGHT BE
EVEN MORE
EXPENSIVE
THAN
FUJIWAKA.
!!
YOU
WANT HIM?
WELL,
THAT'S
WHAT HE
IS.
IF YOU
THOUGHT HE
WAS JUST
PINK'S PLAY-
THING, YOU'RE
DEAD WRONG.
....
I DIDN'T
SEND YOU TO
SOME FLOWER
MASTER WHO
SAID "ANYONE
WILL DO"...
FOR
ABSOLUTELY
NO REASON.
...
HOW-
EVER

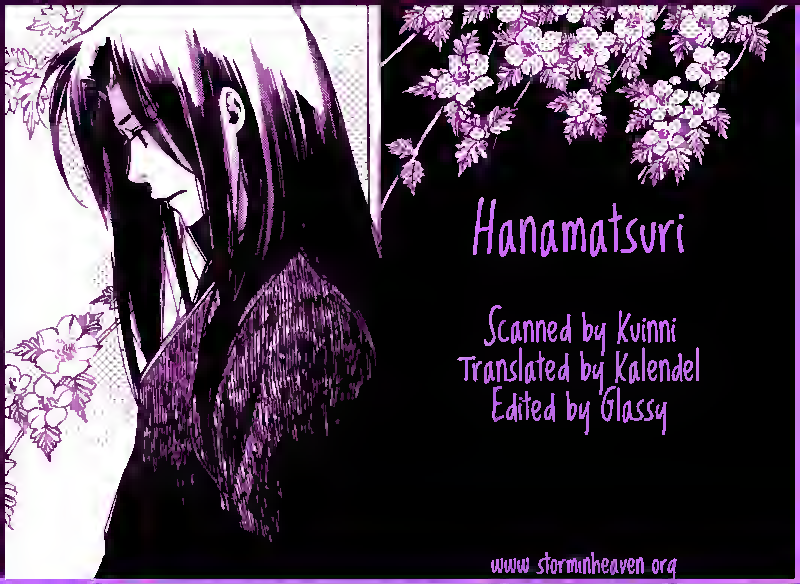
...WHAT...?
BE-CAUSE YOU...
HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO STAND ABOVE ANY "FLOWER," EVEN FUJI-WAKA,
AND BECOME THE TYPE OF PERSON EVEN AKAMATSU WOULD BOW HIS HEAD TO.
TH—
HOW-EVER!
IT WILL TAKE A VERY LONG TIME.
I DON'T CARE!!
IF—
IF THERE'S ANY POSSIBILITY OF GETTING YUKI OUT OF THERE,
I'LL DO ANYTHING!!

I WAS HOPING...
Muromachi School
Instructor Employment Summary
YOU WOULD SAY THAT, KOKUCHOU.
...HUH?
Teach...?
SO, YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME A TEACHER, KOKUCHOU-DONO?
IT JUST KIND OF HAPPENED...
I GOT CARRIED AWAY...
No wait, I was tricked into it.
BUT...
WHAT HARUOU-SAMA SAID IS CERTAINLY TRUE.

FLOWER MASTERS ALL WANT THEIR OWN FLOWERS TO LEARN FROM A SKILLED INSTRUCTOR...
THE INSTANT HARUOU-SAMA ACKNOWLEDGES YOU AS AN INSTRUCTOR,
MOST FLOWER MASTERS WILL COME BEGGING TO YOU TO TEACH THEIR FLOWERS.
...
YOU'LL REACH A HIGH ENOUGH STATUS THAT EVEN MANY FLOWER MASTERS AROUND AKAMATSU-SAMA WILL COME BOWING AND SCRAPING TO YOU.
AND BRING THEIR MONEY WITH THEM, HUH. .
YES
INDEED,
IT WILL TAKE A VERY LONG TIME...
... BUT...
THE ODDS OF IT WORKING...
ARE NOT ZERO.
OH, YES,
I HEARD YOUR FLOWER MASTER GAVE YOU A NAME.
HUH?
YES.
"YAMABUKI."
"YAMABUKI"?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S NECESSARY TO BE A GOOD INSTRUCTOR?
...FROM THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE, YOU DON'T GET WHAT IT MEANS, DO YOU.
HUH?
JUST
.....
RELIABLE SKILLS,
WITH ALL THE DECORATIONS AND FLAIR STRIPPED AWAY,
REDUCED TO THE PLAIN, SIMPLE BASICS.
THE YAMABUKI, A YELLOW ROSE WITH A BOUNTY OF PETALS IS A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER, BUT ITS SEEDS ARE STERILE
IT HAS DIED AWAY, LEAVING LITTLE MORE THAN A LEGEND.
HOWEVER, THE PLAIN, SINGLE-PETALED VERSION OF THE YELLOW ROSE LEAVES BEHIND A SEED THAT WILL GROW INTO A NEW FLOWER
DID YOU KNOW?
THE YELLOW ROSE..
HAS A BLACK SEED.

IT SEEMS THAT HE
UNDER-STOOD WHERE YOUR TRUE APPEAL LIES.
I GUESS HE WAS THE BEST FLOWER MASTER
THIS...
IS THE SECRET STORY OF THE BIRTH OF A PROFESSOR LATER REPUTED TO BE A GOD AMONG MEN...
BUT THE REST OF IT IS A STORY FOR ANOTHER DAY...
End


Hanamatsuri
Scanned by Kvinni
Translated by Kalendel
Edited by Glassy
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Hanamatsuri

花祭

Hanamatsuri

Yesterday
Gyokuen Echo
WHEN I WAS TOLD, "YOUR GRANDFATHER HAS DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES."
I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A KARAOKE SESSION ...
Jangle
Click
Jangle
Jangle
Wheel
HUH?
WHAT!? I CAN'T HEAR YOU!
HUH!? GRANDPA!?
HE'S DEAD?
OH, GOT IT!
KAY THEN, I'M BUSY!
AH, ME NEXT!
Jangle
HUH? That's totally not fair!
Jangle
Renaissance
Jangle
Who called?
Jangle
WAS MY REPLY
THAT'S HOW LITTLE I CARED ABOUT MY GRANDFATHER'S DEATH.
Ding
dong
The next day.
Gamma
WHO'S HERE THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING ...?
Click
YEAH YEAH
WHO IS IT?
AH!
SORRY FOR DROPPING BY SO EARLY
I'M FROM THE ROKUONIN FOUNDATION ...

I'M FUJIWAKA
YOU ARE YAMASE-SAMA'S GRANDSON, HARUOMI-SAMA, ARE YOU NOT?
Huh?
THAT ...
305
IS MY NAME, BUT...
FOR A SECOND THERE I THOUGHT HE MEANT SOMEONE ELSE.
Haruomi sama
Grug
gug
gug
PLUS,
All that
WHAT'S WITH ALL THAT?
Here you go.
THANKS SO MUCH.
...
Tea stains
Souvenir
From a souvenir shop.
Looks bad
I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE BEFORE, BUT...
IT'S HORRIBLE
(Hideo)
YAMASE-SAMA.
ENTRUSTED THE WILL TO ME

HUH?
THE WILL?
WHOSE?
YOUR GRAND-FATHER'S
MY DAD'S AN ONLY CHILD. SO DOESN'T IT ALL GO TO HIM?
NOT ACCORDING TO HIS WISHES IN THE WILL.
HUH!?
REALLY!?
CRAP!
DAD WAS SUPER EXCITED YESTERDAY AND SAID HE WAS GOING TO GO BUY A CAR!
With the inheritance.
DARN
drip
drop!
I..
HAVE TO CALL HOME AND TELL THEM.
..
...
WAIT,
WHAT?
ISN'T ...
THIS KIND OF STRANGE?
WHY IS HE ...
TELLING ME THIS?
AND..
MY GRANDPA'S WILL....
WHY .?
MY FOLKS DON'T EVEN LIVE IN THIS CITY.

IF NO ONE IN MY FAMILY EVEN KNOWS ABOUT IT,
WHY DOES THIS GUY HAVE IT?
SEVERAL YEARS AGO,
YAMASE-SAMA BECAME A "FLOWER MASTER"
HUH? A FLOWER ...
"FLOWER MASTER."
WHAT?
IT'S SOMETHING THAT MOST PEOPLE PROBABLY AREN'T AWARE OF, THOUGH.
PRESENTLY, THE ROKUONIN FOUNDATION IS THE MAIN LEADER AND SPONSORS THE PROGRAM
AND PEOPLE FROM DISTINGUISHED FAMILIES PARTICIPATE IN IT
HIGH RANKING BUSINESSMEN...
YAMASE-SAMA'S "FLOWER" ... IS NAMED HANABISHI.
? ?
TO PUT IT BLUNTLY,
OOH.
Blunt
IT IS A PASTIME OF THE RICH.

YAMASE-SAMA TREATED HANABISHI WITH THE GREATEST CARE
HE CAME TO US, WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO HANABISHI AFTER HIS DEATH
HOWEVER, THOUGH HE WAS WORRIED, HE HAD GROWN ESTRANGED FROM HIS FAMILY.
SO HE WOUND UP ENTRUSTING HIS WILL TO THE FOUNDATION
IT WAS
HIS LAST WISH
Like this?
From a buffet.
Taking home left-overs
Sending 1000 yen as a wedding gift.
Grandpa's Famous (?) moments
etc
etc
Doesn't make sense.
SO THAT OLD MAN HAD A "FLOWER", HUH...
BUT EVERYONE IN MY FAMILY KNOWS THAT HE WAS JUST AS STINGY... AS HE WAS LOADED.
I'D HEARD THAT GRANDPA WAS COMPLETELY LOADED
HIS WILL WENT LIKE THIS:
Though my family is completely average.

"If my dear Hanabishi-chan likes Haruomi and says it's OK, then I leave everything to Haruomi ♡"

※(Original text.)

IS SOMETHING AS RIDICULOUS AS THIS EVEN A VALID WILL?
BUT THE SPECIFICS ARE REALLY DONE IN DETAIL....
WHAT IS THIS?
When he's about to die...?
HEY,
This is how grandpa writes.
"If he doesn't give the OK, I leave everything to Hanabishi-chan!"
※(Original text.)
"But,"
WITH MY FAMILY BEGGING ME TO DO IT, I WENT TO VISIT GRANDPA'S HOUSE.
And so...
And so well-endowed maids came out to greet me...
Welcome home, master!
Huge bodies...
All this is the gate!?
The gate!?
Not an actual flower
kthink
kthink
WAIT ...
JUST WHO IS "HANABISHI"?
IF...
HE LEAVES ALL THAT TO HANABISHI-CHAN, IT'LL BE MADNESS.
AS FOR GRANDPA'S INHERITANCE,
I SAW THE AMOUNT, BUT IT WAS SO ASTRONOMICAL THAT I COULDN'T EVEN COMPREHEND IT.
Hundred thousand ten thousand hundred thousand two hundred thousand Ah, wait where was I?

A BELL ...
Jingle
Jingle
Jingle
Oh HANABISHI-CHAN!
HANABISHI-CHAN IS OVER THIS WAY ♡
WHAT THE HELL, GRAMPS!
H—

HE WAS KEEPING A LITTLE GIRL AROUND!? WHAT A BLOODY PERV!!
WHAM
BIG MISTAKE!
OH MY! HANABISHI-CHAN IS A BOY, YOU KNOW...
flop
THIS SUCKS!
HE REALLY DOESN'T LIKE YOU.
Blehh
AND WITH THAT ...
.....
I WANT TO CRY ...
He threw a wooden knife at me.

MY NEW LIFE ...
OF TRYING TO WIN OVER HANABISHI-CHAN COM-MENCED.
HANA-BISHI-CHAN JUST LOVES NORIMAKI ♡
First I tried feeding him
munch munch
NORIMAKI
Hm?
Aick
Ow
—UH!
WHAT WAS THAT FOR, YOU LITTLE BRAT!?
YOU'RE SO WHINY,
YOU PIECE OF TRASH!
Trash
What the
HUH?
I'LL TELL YOU THIS STRAIGHT UP.
LISTEN,
Grandpa's pretty hot, looks huh.
...
HE IS CUTE.
BUT...
ISN'T NORIMAKI
KINDA OLD-FASHIONED FOR SOMEONE YOUR AGE?

I...
ABSOLUTELY...
I HATE NORIMAKI.
REMEMBER THAT, YOU BUMBLE-BRAIN!
Release
Jingle
jingle
CRAP.
I REALLY DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING TO GET ALONG...!
...WAIT A SEC.
Hanaeishi-chan!
Let's do up your hair
Sure!
IS THIS GUY...
SERIOUSLY CALLED A "FLOWER"?
IS THAT LEGIT?
I mean, his attitude is way OFF!

"FLOWERS"?
BASICALLY, THEY TRAIN TO BE PERFORMERS.
PERFORMERS? LIKE COMEDIANS?
Oh, no
TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE
HUH
DANCING AND SINGING AND SUCH
THE "FLOWER MASTER" IS THE "FLOWER'S" BENEFACTOR.
Isn't it like
PAYING FOR HIS COMPANY ...?
THE "FLOWER MASTER" APPRECIATES HIS "FLOWER'S" ART MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.
AND HE NURTURES HIS "FLOWER'S" TALENT.
?? SOME KIND OF PRETEND CHILD REARING?
THE "FLOWER MASTER" BRINGS HIS "FLOWER" TO A FLOWER FESTIVAL,
WHERE ALL THE MASTERS SHOW OFF THEIR "FLOWERS"
THE FESTIVALS ARE SO BRILLIANT, IT'S LIKE ALL THE FLOWERS IN THE WORLD GATHERED IN ONE PLACE!
SURE, I GUESS IF A WHOLE BUNCH OF PEOPLE LIKE HIM ...
GATHERED IN ONE SPOT, IT WOULD BE SHOWY, BUT. .
BUT ISN'T THAT JUST SUPPORTING ONE PERSON,
AND BUYING HIM EXPENSIVE CLOTHES,
AND HAVING HIM TRAINED IN SOMETHING?
Like pretend child-rearing

WHICH MAKES HIM WHAT? A VOLUNTEER?
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A "PASTIME OF THE RICH".
They've got plenty of extra money
...OH, RIGHT.
BUT, FOR A PASTIME OF THE RICH...
IS HE REALLY GOOD ENOUGH ...?
TRASH!!!
...
MAN,
THIS HAS REALLY TURNED INTO A PAIN...
IF THIS IS HOW IT WAS GOING TO BE, GRANDPA SHOULD'VE COME AROUND MORE OFTEN...
AND SPOILED HIS CUTE GRANDSON.
IF HE WAS THAT LOADED, IT WOULD'VE BEEN NICE TO GET WHATEVER RIDICULOUS THING I ASKED FOR...
...
SO IF I CAN'T GET HANABISHI-CHAN TO LIKE ME,
HE GETS THAT YACHT TOO, HUH.
MUST BE NICE.
BOATS ARE AWE-SOME ...
I WANT ONE.
"GRANDPA!"

I...
WANT A BOAT!
OH!
Kids can't ask for stuff that expensive!
TOUMA
Jerk!
I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING PAINFUL...
Wagaya
Workbook
Boat Lover's Study Aid
AH!
Jingle
Jingle
Jingle
DON'T JUST PLAY AROUND WITH MY WORKBOOKS!

YOU'RE STUDYING BOATS?
YEAH.
THAT'S MY HOME-WORK.
UNLIKE A FREELOADER LIKE YOU I'M ACTUALLY A HARD-WORKING COLLEGE STUDENT.
Oh!
I'M SUPPOSED TO GET HIM TO LIKE ME!
HERE I AM BLURTING OUT WHAT I REALLY THINK! I SUCK AT DIPLOMACY...!
Heh.
COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE FREE-LOADERS YOU KNOW.
Quit acting so high and mighty.
QUIT LYING!
YOU DON'T KNOW A THING!
I DO TOO
Dummy.
LOOK RIGHT HERE
ARE YOU AN IDIOT?
YOU GO TO COLLEGE FOR THIS?
THIS IS FULL OF MISTAKES

...
SEE?
I'M REALLY VERY SMART.
UNDER-STAND?
...
HE'S ...
REALLY SMART?
stare
WHAT?
YOU.
LIKE BOATS?
NOT A BIT.
Why would you think that?
You mean as trash!

HOLD IT, HARUOMI ...!
DON'T GET HIM MAD NOW...!
W...
WELL ANYWAY, YOU DO SOME KIND OF PERFORMANCE ART, RIGHT?
I'D KIIINDA LIKE TO SEE YOU DO YOUR THING
YEAH
Kidding!
Ahaha!
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SHOW YOU!
...WAIT A SEC ...
IF I REALLY THINK ABOUT IT,
PISSED, OF COURSE.
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE'S THE ONE IN THE WAY.
IF HE WEREN'T AROUND, THE INHERITANCE WOULD GET PASSED ON LIKE USUAL.
AND ISN'T HE JUST A FREELOADER!?
EVEN IF HE DOES HAVE TALENT OR WHATEVER.
And a leech!
YOU...
REALLY ARE AN IDIOT.

THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE NOW, HAVING TO SUCK UP TO ME
AREN'T YOU EVEN A LITTLE EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT?
—HEY!
THIS WHOLE THING...
IS YOUR FAULT, YOU KNOW!
IT'S YOUR FAULT!
YOU NEVER CAME TO SEE YOUR GRANDFATHER!!
...!!
Uh.
AND NOW YOU'RE HERE JUST TO GET SOME MONEY! WELL YOU'RE TOO LATE!
STUPID STUPID!
STUPID!
QUIT CALLING ME STUPID!
IT'S MY GRANDPA'S FAULT FOR BEING SO STINGY!
WHO'D WANT TO GO VISIT A STRICT OLD MAN LIKE HIM!?
IF HE HADN'T BEEN SO STINGY,
I'D HAVE—
AH!

DAMN YOU!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?
QUIT CALLING HIM STINGY, YOU IDIOT!
STINGY IS STINGY! WHAT'S WRONG WITH SAYING IT LIKE IT IS...!
YOU'RE ... TOO ROUGH WITH YOUR FOOD!
IS NORIMAKI REALLY YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?
I TOLD YOU I HATED IT!!
I LIKE POTATO CHIPS, YOU DUMMY!
BUT I ATE NORIMAKI BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT MADE THE OLD MAN HAPPY...!
AND I HATE BOATS!
BUT HE ALWAYS WENT ON AND ON ABOUT BOATS...!
THE WHOLE THING IS YOUR FAULT!!
AAH!
OOF!

THIS IS BEYOND SHITTY!
SPLAT
It wasn't even a big fall!
Totally lame
I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO CRAWL OUT OF THERE MYSELF.
A BIT LATER...
Huh?
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
I'm fine don't worry
Oh
Are you okay?
I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS FROM NORMAL NEGLECT, OR BECAUSE OF THE STRESS OF THE SITUATION,
BUT BEFORE I REALIZED IT...
Huh?
I WAS SICK AS A DOG.

I CAN REMEMBER FALLING INTO THE LAKE...
...?
I DON'T REMEMBER LYING DOWN.
I CAN'T RECALL EXACTLY HOW I GOT HERE,
BUT IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT I'VE GOT A FEVER.
A COLD?
OR DID...
I EAT SOMETHING AND GET SICK...?
IF THAT LITTLE SPLASH GAVE ME A COLD, I'M MORE DELICATE THAN I THOUGHT.
WHAT'RE YOU MUTTERING ABOUT?
Heh heh
Considering he's lower middle class, he's kind of pappy to be called delicate.
.....
Oh, Is that you, Hana-kun-chan...
DON'T CALL ME "CHAN". IT'S CREEPY.
WHOEVER SAID IDIOTS DON'T CATCH COLDS WAS LYING.
HEY YOU.
I'M SICK, YOU KNOW
BE NICE TO ME
...
OH, HE SHUT UP.
CRAP, I CAN'T STAY FOCUSED.
MAYBE HE'S FEELING A LITTLE GUILTY.
cough

I USED TO STAY HERE A LOT, BACK THEN.
WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
REMEMBER THIS ROOM.
..I...
WHY...
DID YOU STOP COMING?
WELL...
GRANDPA WAS STINGY ...
BUT ALL THE MONEY HE SAVED WOULD'VE GONE TO YOU DUDE.
THAT'S TRUE TOO...
THE REASON WE STOPPED COMING ...
WAS PROBABLY BECAUSE OF ME.
THAT'S THE FEELING I GOT FROM MY FAMILY.

AND...
I JUST DID WHAT THEY DID.
...
WE WENT TO SEE THE BOATS
ON THAT TRIP, THERE WERE SOME HUGE BOATS ANCHORED IN THE HARBOR.
AND THEY WERE SO COOL.
I...
DIDN'T REALLY CARE IF IT WAS THE EXPENSIVE YACHT THAT I SAW, THOUGH.
I...
WANT A BOAT!
I PROBABLY WOULD'VE BEEN FINE IF HE'D HAVE BOUGHT ME A TOY BOAT AS A SOUVENIR.
BUT HE SCOLDED ME AND I GOT MAD AT HIM.
THEN I OVERHEARD MY RELATIVES CALLING HIM STINGY...
YEAH, THAT'S IT.
GRANDPA WAS STINGY, SO IT'S HIS OWN FAULT.
THE ANGRY OLD MAN IS TO BLAME!
AND EVER SINCE THEN...
IT STAYED LIKE THAT
...

WHILE I LAID THERE HALF-ASLEEP.
I REMEMBERED TWO THINGS...
Zzzzz——
WHAT HE'S SAYING.
I DON'T REALLY GET...
Dazed——
...HUH?
...
IS MINE.
NOTHING HERE...
...IDIOT.
EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE ME, MAYBE YOU'LL GIVE ME THE BOAT...?
Oh, but I'd need a place to stay tonight.
LUCKY~
BUT ISN'T IT YOURS, NOW?
YEAH...
HE... BOUGHT A BOAT.

THE FIRST WAS HANABISHI'S FACE...
OH, WHAT?
AS I WAS FALLING INTO THE LAKE.
IS HE ACTUALLY NICE?
Spl
AND THE SECOND ...
IS THAT,
A LONG TIME AGO, I USED TO LOVE NORIMAKI.
—YOU SHOULD ...
AT LEAST UNDER-STAND THAT.
AND ONCE I REMEMBERED THAT, IT SUDDENLY CAME TO ME
I GET IT, GRANDPA.
HE'D BEEN WAITING FOR ME TO VISIT.

A SHORT TIME LATER,
MY FATHER ARRANGED A DELAYED CEREMONY FOR MY GRANDPA.
SO IS THAT WHY...
HE TOOK IN HANABISHI ...?
RICH AS HE WAS, HE WAS STINGY,
SO WE FIGURED ONLY A FEW PEOPLE WOULD SHOW UP.
All in black
BUT WE WERE COMPLETELY DUMB-FOUNDED ...
BY THE ENDLESS STREAM OF HIGH-PROFILE GUESTS THAT ARRIVED.
On TV, actors bureaucrat
Dad
MY OLD MAN ...
WAS REALLY SOME-THING, HUH—

Oh!
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN
NOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
UM...
WELL, YOU KNOW...
THAT'S RIGHT,
DID YOU SEE HANABISHI'S DANCING?
NO ..?
I SEE.
HE WOULDN'T SHOW ME..
Sorry
IF IT'S NOT A BOTHER,
WOULD YOU MIND ALLOWING HANABISHI TO DANCE BEFORE THE FUNERAL PROCESSION?
OH?
YAMASE-SAMA TRULY LOVED HANABISHI'S DANCING, YOU SEE...
EVEN DURING HIS FINAL HOURS...
OH, I SEE.
IF THAT'S THE CASE,
THERE'S TIME FOR IT.
chatter

SFX: JINGLE
THE DANCE...
IT WOULDN'T BE AN EXAGGERATION TO CALL HANABISHI YAMASE-DONO'S TRUE LEGACY.
HE'S A PRODIGY THAT THE OLD MAN CULTURED AND DEVELOPED.
YAMASE-DONO'S HANABISHI IS ONE OF THE BEST PERFORMANCE DANCERS AROUND!
OH?
REALLY THAT FAMOUS...?
UM... IS HANABISHI...
BEAUTIFUL, AS ALWAYS!
TO THINK I'D BE ABLE TO SEE HANABISHI DANCE...!
WOW...

SEEMED SOMEWHAT CHEERFUL, AND SOMEWHAT SAD
BRIGHT, I GUESS
LONELY, BUT...
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT... THE SPECIFICS OF DANCING BUT...
MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE HANABISHI REALLY MEANT A LOT TO GRANDPA,
AND HANABISHI REALLY LOVED HIM.

I WAS THE ONE GRANDPA WAS REALLY WAITING FOR.
IT WAS LIKE MY EYES HAD BEEN OPENED.
AND YET,
NO MATTER HOW HARD HANABISHI TRIED, HE COULDN'T BE ME...
AND I'M SURE...
THAT BOTH HANABISHI AND MY GRANDPA REALIZED THAT.
HERE

MY STATEMENT
IT SAYS THAT I DON'T WANT ANYTHING.
I WENT AHEAD AND SIGNED IT.
WHAT'S THIS?
...WHY?
WHY...?
BECAUSE I DON'T REALLY WANT ANYTHING
WHAT? YOU DON'T?
AREN'T FLOWERS SUPPOSED TO GET MONEY FROM FLOWER MASTERS?
BUT I'M ALREADY GOOD ENOUGH TO MAKE MY OWN WAY.
WHILE HE WAS MY PATRON, YES.
BESIDES,
THE WILL WAS BECAUSE I WAS ANGRY AT YOU GUYS FOR CUTTING OFF THE OLD MAN
I JUST DID IT BECAUSE I WANTED YOU GUYS TO WORRY.
WHAT!?

WELL,
THAT'S HOW IT GOES.
SEE YOU!
WHAT FOR!?
BUT YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT THAT IT WASN'T EVEN ANY FUN.
WHAT'D YOU SAY!?
HUH?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
A FLOWER CAN'T STICK AROUND WITHOUT A FLOWER MASTER.
UNTIL MY NEXT MASTER BUYS ME,
I'LL GO BACK TO ROKUONIN!
BYE!
...
WAIT!

HUH? BUT...
WITHOUT A MASTER
YOU HAVE TO HAVE A MASTER?
HAVE LOTS OF THINGS I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT MY GRANDPA
I...
DO YOU HAVE TO GO BACK?
YOU CAN STAY HERE, CAN'T YOU?
W—
WELL ...
AND JUST LIKE THAT ...
CAN I BE HIM?
WHAT!?
OF COURSE YOU CAN.
HUH...
WELL...
THE RAREST TYPE OF FLOWER MASTER, ONE OF HUMBLE ORIGINS, JOINED THE RANKS...

END

To newcomers and long-time readers alike, hello! This is Aki. Thank you so much for picking up this volume. Because I'm also drawing Angel's Doubt, which is serializing, I'll be releasing two volumes of work at once. Surprise!

With two volumes going out, there's a lot of stuff I wanted to do. But, you won't find handwritten pages in this volume... Even though there are in Angel's Doubt...

I came to realize that my handwriting is kind of messy. What do you mean, keep it uniform? Did someone say something? I must be hearing things! Hahahaha

That said, Hanamatsuri finally has a volume of its own. (haha)

That reminds me, when I started drawing this is about the time I first started using digital screentones in my work. I had to keep doing it over and over to get each one right...

And while I was tinkering with things, I became a little moved...

Because it took a while before this volume was ready, it seems like the designs changed. And like they didn't. (haha)
I thought to myself, there are so many things that I can't let slip by, but this whole thing is just one page in the history of the galaxy. I'd be grateful if you looked at this with such a broad perspective...

Because I was working on this for so long, I thought of several flower and flower master stories that I couldn't draw. And I couldn't move the story of Haruou and Fujiwaka along more, either!

If I'm someday given the chance to continue this, even though I'd tell more stories of flowers and flower masters meeting up, I'd like to take a break to tell the story of Fujiwaka's past and such. I'm still quietly holding hope for it. But, that hope will probably fall on deaf ears. So, pretend you didn't hear about it! (haha)

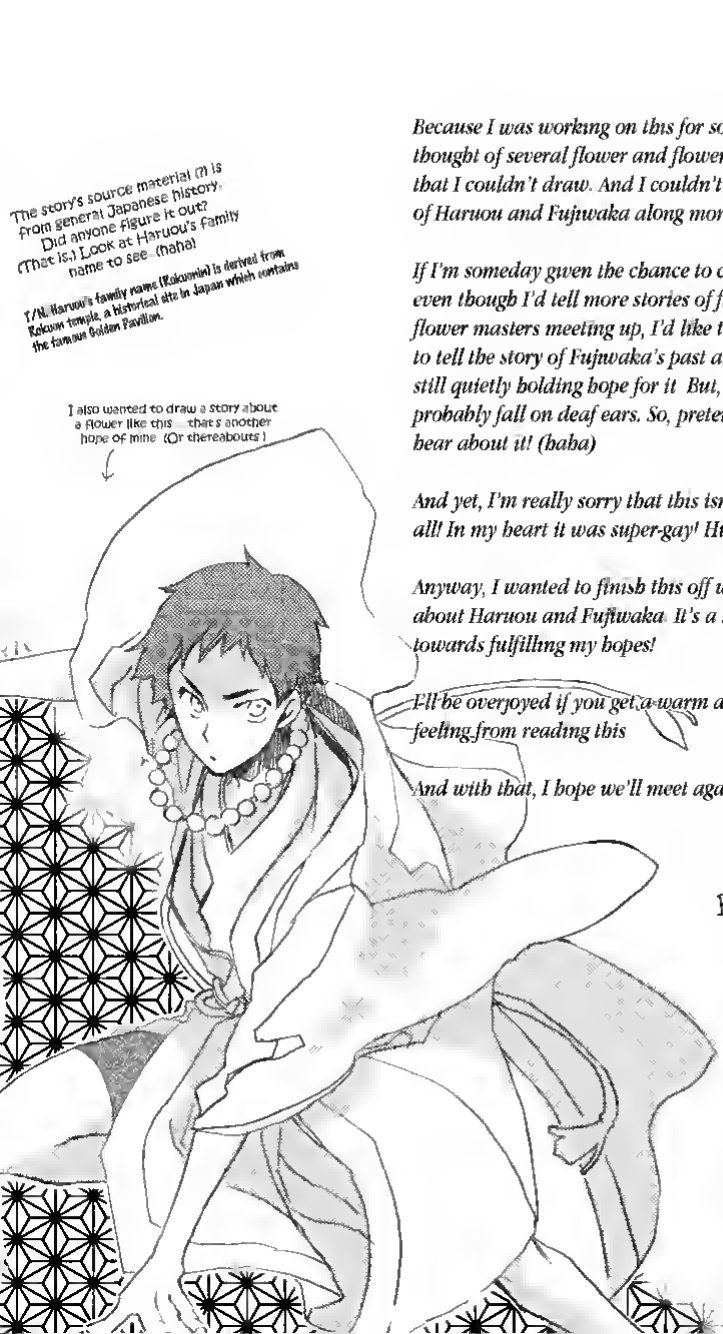
And yet, I'm really sorry that this isn't very BL at all! In my heart it was super-gay! Huh? (haha)

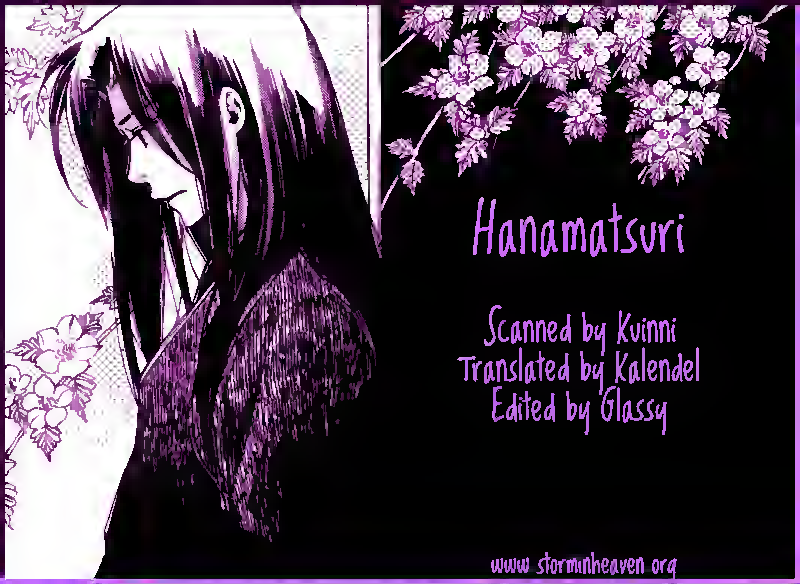
Anyway, I wanted to finish this off with a story about Haruou and Fujiwaka. It's a stepping stone towards fulfilling my hopes!

I'll be overjoyed if you get a warm and fluffy feeling from reading this

And with that, I hope we'll meet again somewhere!

By Aki


The story's source material (?) is from general Japanese history. Did anyone figure it out? (That is.) Look at Haruou's family name to see. (haha)
T/N: Haruou's family name (Rokuonin) is derived from Rokuon-temple, a historical site in Japan which contains the famous Golden Pavilion.
I also wanted to draw a story about a flower like this... that's another hope of mine. (Or thereabouts.)


Hanamatsuri
Scanned by Kvinni
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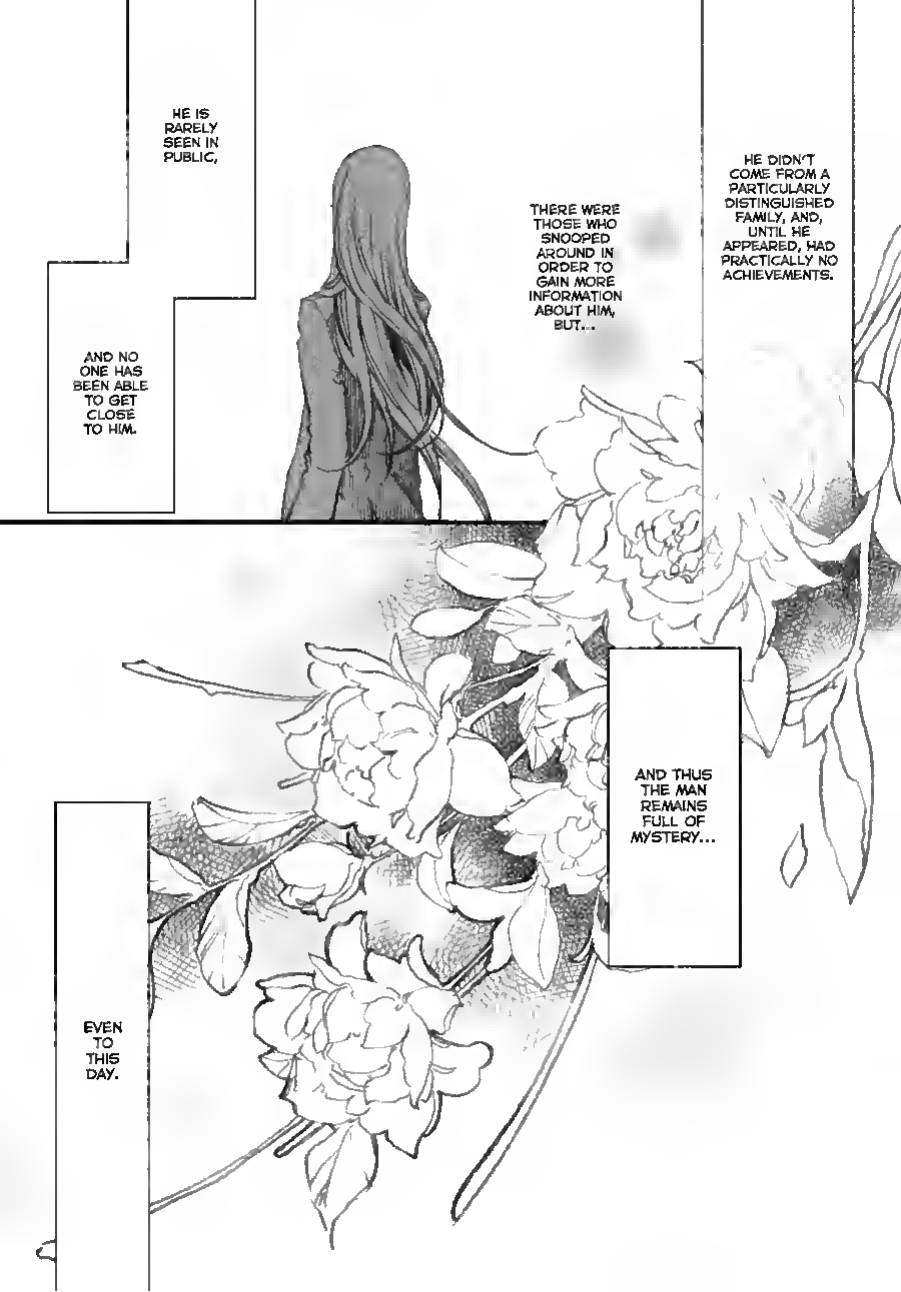
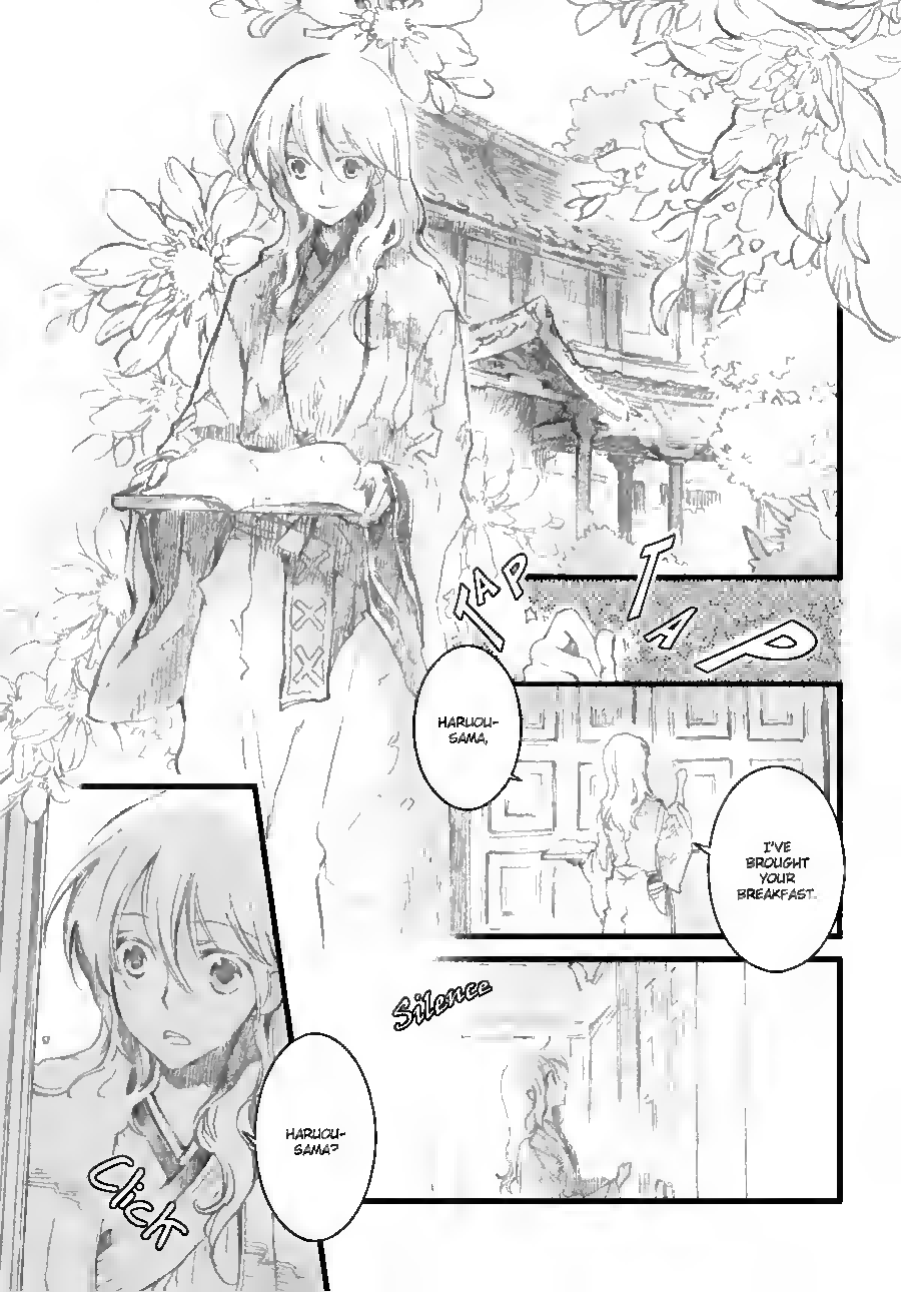
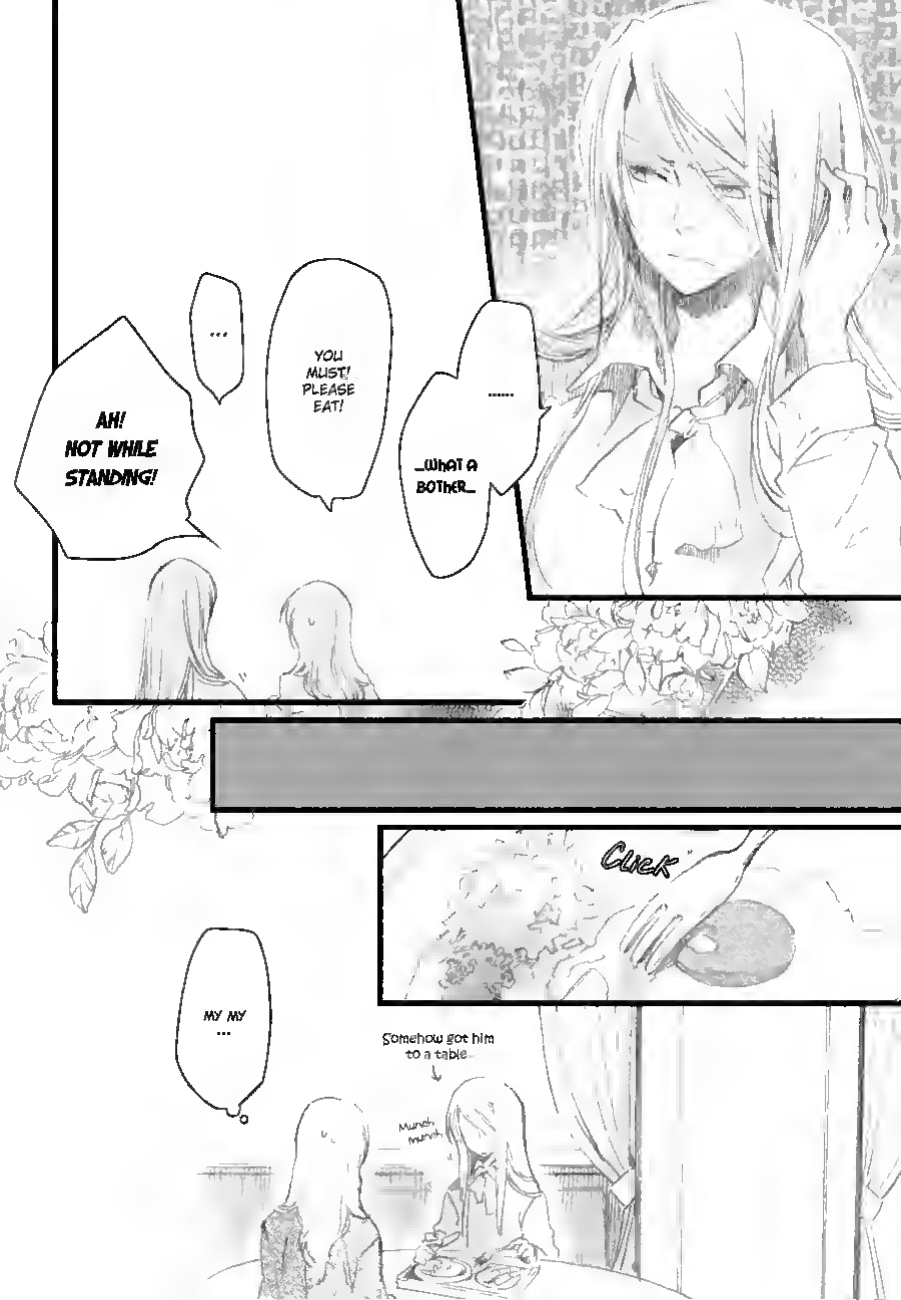
THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE CULTURE OF "FLOWERS" WHO DOES NOT KNOW HIS NAME.
—NAMELY, HE IS THE MAN STANDING AT THE PINNACLE OF CULTURE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND IS THE FOUNDER OF THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, "MUROMACHI UNIVERSITY".
ROKUONIN HARUJOU
HE IS THIS COUNTRY'S GREATEST "FLOWER MASTER".
Hanamatsuri
HE SUDDENLY APPEARED SEVERAL YEARS AGO,
AND IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE TURNED THE WORLD OF "FLOWERS" ON ITS HEAD.
HOWEVER, THERE IS PRACTICALLY NO INFORMATION ABOUT THE MAN HIMSELF.

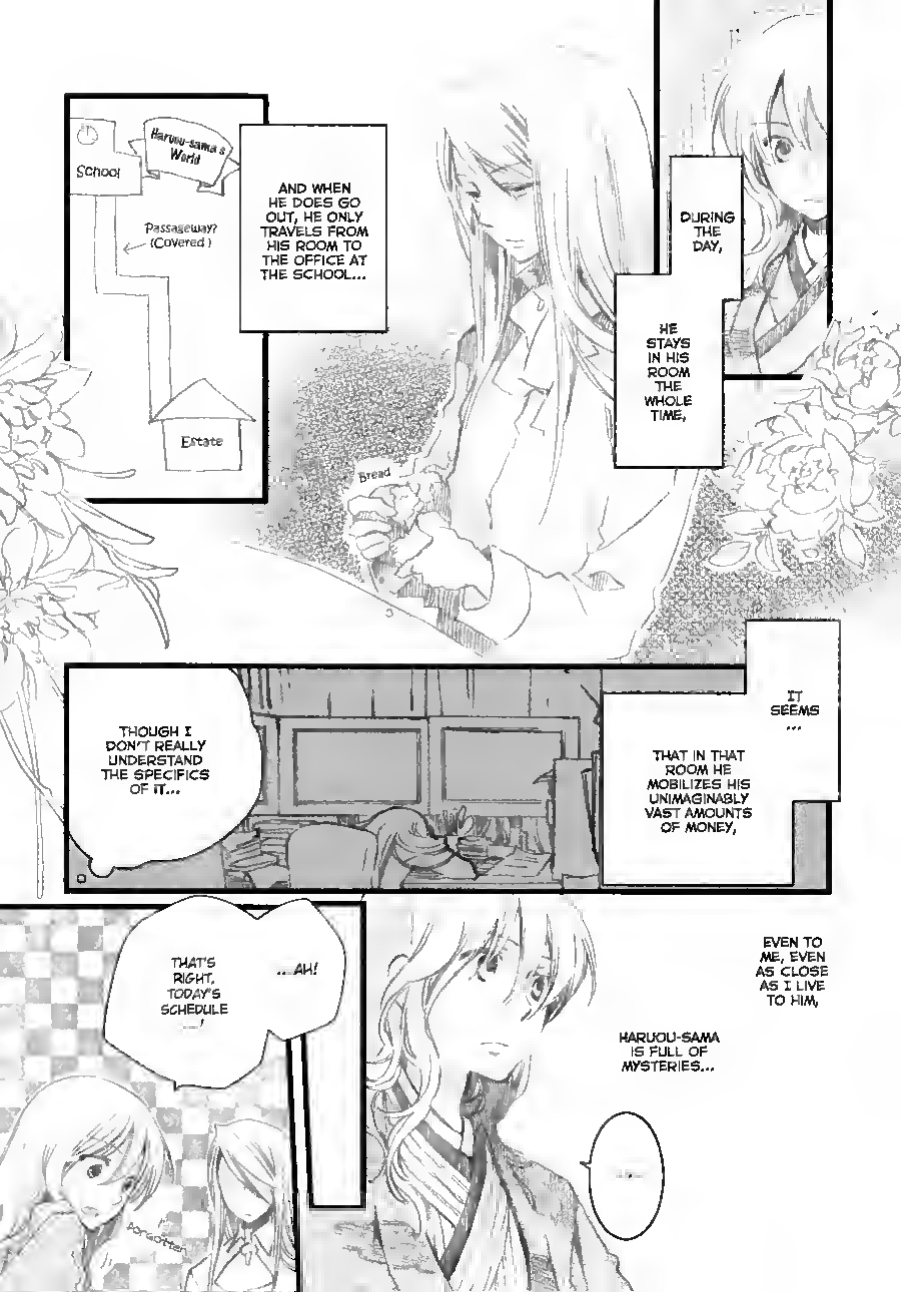

HE IS RARELY SEEN IN PUBLIC,
AND NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO GET CLOSE TO HIM.
THERE WERE THOSE WHO SNOOPED AROUND IN ORDER TO GAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HIM, BUT...
HE DIDN'T COME FROM A PARTICULARLY DISTINGUISHED FAMILY, AND, UNTIL HE APPEARED, HAD PRACTICALLY NO ACHIEVEMENTS.
AND THUS THE MAN REMAINS FULL OF MYSTERY...
EVEN TO THIS DAY.


TAP
TAP
HARUOU-SAMA,
I'VE BROUGHT YOUR BREAKFAST.
Silence
HARUOU-SAMA?
Click

HA.
HARUOU-SAMA
YOU'RE SLEEPING THERE AGAIN...
AH!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I ASK YOU TO SLEEP ...
IN YOUR FUTON ...
AH!
Tangled up again!

FUJI-WAKA..
I TOLD YOU NOT TO COME IN, DIDN'T I?
YES, BUT...
IF YOU SLEEP LIKE THAT, YOU'LL CATCH A COLD..
fwip
fwip
fwip
...AN ANIMAL TRAIL...
CLUTTERED.
AND DIDN'T I SAY THAT I DIDN'T WANT BREAKFAST?
OH, WELL... I DID HEAR YOU SAY THAT...
BUT...
YOU HAVE TO EAT PROPERLY...


AH! NOT WHILE STANDING!
...
YOU MUST! PLEASE EAT!
.....
WHAT A BOTHER
CLICK
MY MY ...
Somehow got him to a table...
Munch munch


School
Haruou-sama's World
Passageway? (Covered)
Estate
AND WHEN HE DOES GO OUT, HE ONLY TRAVELS FROM HIS ROOM TO THE OFFICE AT THE SCHOOL...
DURING THE DAY,
HE STAYS IN HIS ROOM THE WHOLE TIME,
Bread
IT SEEMS ...
THAT IN THAT ROOM HE MOBILIZES HIS UNIMAGINABLY VAST AMOUNTS OF MONEY,
THOUGH I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SPECIFICS OF IT...
EVEN TO ME, EVEN AS CLOSE AS I LIVE TO HIM,
HARUOU-SAMA IS FULL OF MYSTERIES...
...
...AH!
THAT'S RIGHT. TODAY'S SCHEDULE
Forgotten

I'VE ADDED AN EVENING MEETING TO YOUR SCHEDULE
MEETING?
WITH INUOU-DONO'S FLOWER MASTER, OUMI-SAMA.
OH, THAT GUY?
(Though he doesn't speak much.)
The ever serious type
...
IS INUOU COMING, AS WELL?
YES, OF COURSE
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, BUT I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HIM AGAIN.
AFTER THE MEETING TONIGHT,
IF YOU WANT
YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU'D LIKE FOR THE REST OF THE EVENING
YOU'LL HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT, SINCE IT'S BEEN SO LONG, I BET

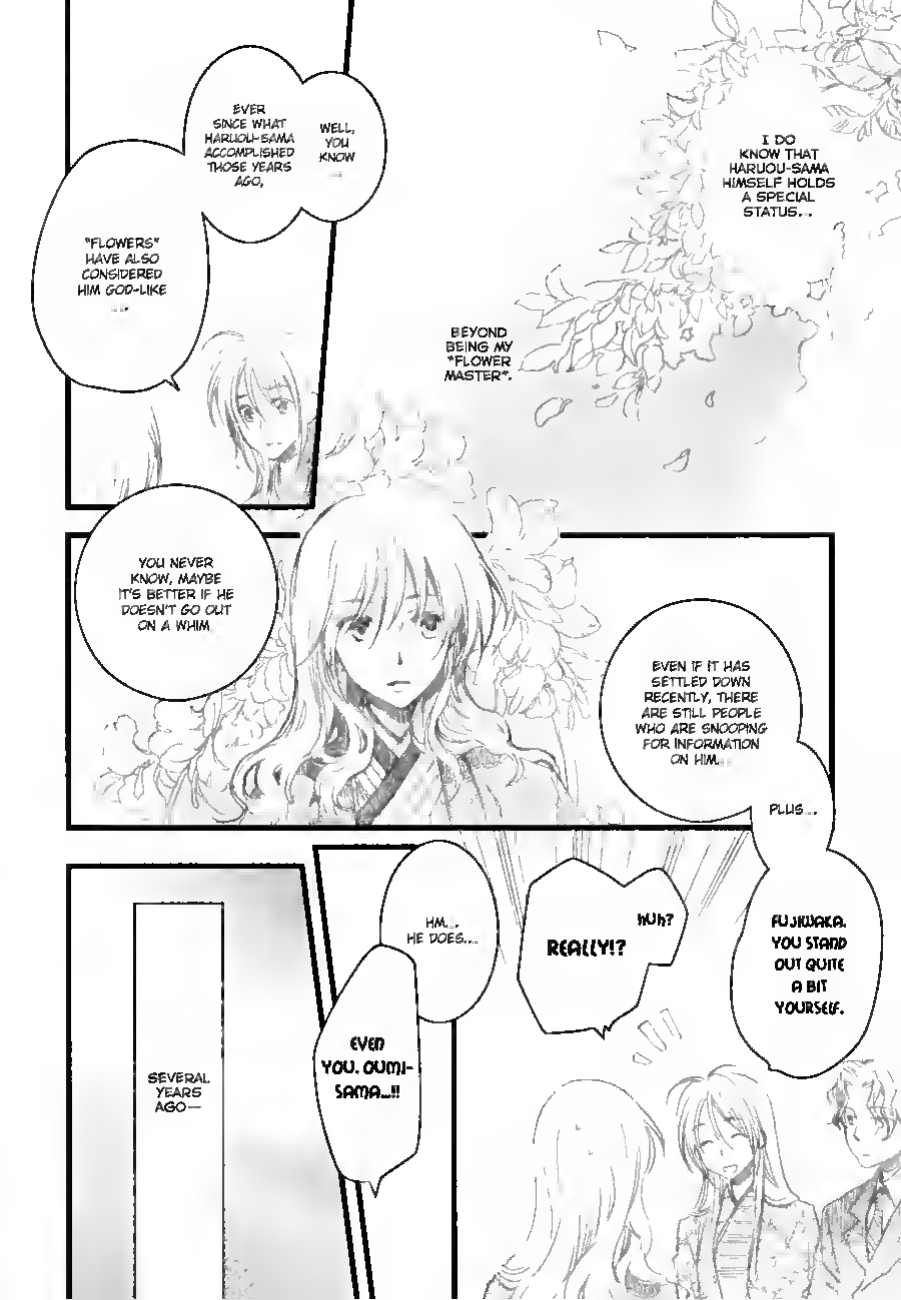
...AH!
CALL IT A VACATION
JUST THE NIGHT
...YOU MEAN I HAVE THE NIGHT OFF?
WE COULD DISCUSS IT ALONG THE WAY...
NOT INTER-ESTED
IF THAT'S THE CASE, WOULD YOU AND OUMI-SAMA LIKE TO GO SOMEWHERE WITH US, AS WELL?
Oh, really?
...WELL, THAT'S THE FEELING I GET FROM HIM.

A SHUT-IN!
THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT!?
!!!
Hanabishi
Just came to hang out for the day
Iwou
YEAH,
THAT IS UNHEALTHY
YES
I DO TRY TO GET HIM TO GO OUT, BUT...
HE'S QUITE, WELL.
IT'S NOT THAT YOU'VE NEVER GONE OUT ANYWHERE.
THEN.. YOU DO GO OUT OCCASIONALLY?
N... NO, HE'S NOT!
...PROBABLY!
Ah.

...HANABISHI, THAT'S A LITTLE LIKE THROWING HIM IN THE DEEP END...
I'LL BE GOING TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK WITH KAZUOMI.
DO YOU GUYS WANT TO COME ALONG?
...just once...
We went to visit a grave...
a cemetery?
AH, OH,
I'M SORRY FOR ASKING.
Gah
THAT'S FOR OLD FOGIES!
I KNOW. LET'S VISIT SOME BUDDHA STATUES!
IT'S REALLY RELAXING. ♡
OH.
HUH!?
REALLY? OUMI-SAMA SAID IT WAS REALLY FUN
HUH!?
THAT ISN'T A NORMAL HOBBY FOR YOUNG GUYS!
WAIT HOW OLD ARE YOU INUOU-DOHOI?

OUMI-SAMA.
OH,
YOU WERE HERE?
ARE YOU DONE?
WELL THEN,
we can get going.
NO,
YOU CAN KEEP TALKING
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU GUYS WERE HAVING A GOOD TIME,
AND I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY MORE PLANS FOR THE DAY.
SO, AS YOU SEE...
WE'RE TRYING TO GET HARUOU-SAMA TO GO OUT.
Was there?!
HM.
I SEE.

WELL, WE REALLY SHOULD STOP VISITING THE STATUES
IT'S PRETTY AWKWARD ..
WHAT!?
D... didn't you say that it was fun!?
Hm?
WELL..
AS FOR THAT,
WATCHING YOU IMITATE THE STATUE'S FACES IS FUN
Ah. Mmm Uhh
WHAT!?
...HOW NICE...
...
You're horrible!
Was that
...
Tch.
...WAS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE A COMPLIMENT?
I wasn't making faces that weird!!


I DO KNOW THAT HARUOU-SAMA HIMSELF HOLDS A SPECIAL STATUS..
BEYOND BEING MY "FLOWER MASTER".
WELL, YOU KNOW...
EVER SINCE WHAT HARUOU-SAMA ACCOMPLISHED THOSE YEARS AGO,
"FLOWERS" HAVE ALSO CONSIDERED HIM GOD-LIKE...
YOU NEVER KNOW, MAYBE IT'S BETTER IF HE DOESN'T GO OUT ON A WHIM.
EVEN IF IT HAS SETTLED DOWN RECENTLY, THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO ARE SNOOPING FOR INFORMATION ON HIM...
PLUS...
FUJIWARA. YOU STAND OUT QUITE A BIT YOURSELF.
HUH?
REALLY!?
HM... HE DOES...
EVEN YOU, OUMI-SAMA...!!
SEVERAL YEARS AGO—

"FLOWERS" ARE YOUNG MEN WHO ASPIRE TO LEARN AN ART.
"FLOWER MASTERS" ARE NOBLES WHO BECOME THE "FLOWER'S" PATRONS.
"FLOWER MASTERS" APPRECIATE THEIR "FLOWER'S" ART MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE,
AND "FLOWERS" ACCEPT THEIR "FLOWER MASTERS" AS BENEFACTORS, AND FREELY PRACTICE THEIR ART.
WITH HARUOU'S APPEAR-ANCE,
THE "FLOWER FESTIVAL" CHANGED GREATLY.
THAT IS,
THE FLOWER HIMSELF IS A MIRROR THAT REFLECTS THE CHARACTER AND NOBILITY OF HIS FLOWER MASTER—

A "FLOWER FESTIVAL" IS A FESTIVAL WHERE FLOWER MASTERS TAKE THEIR FLOWERS TO SHOW THEM OFF.

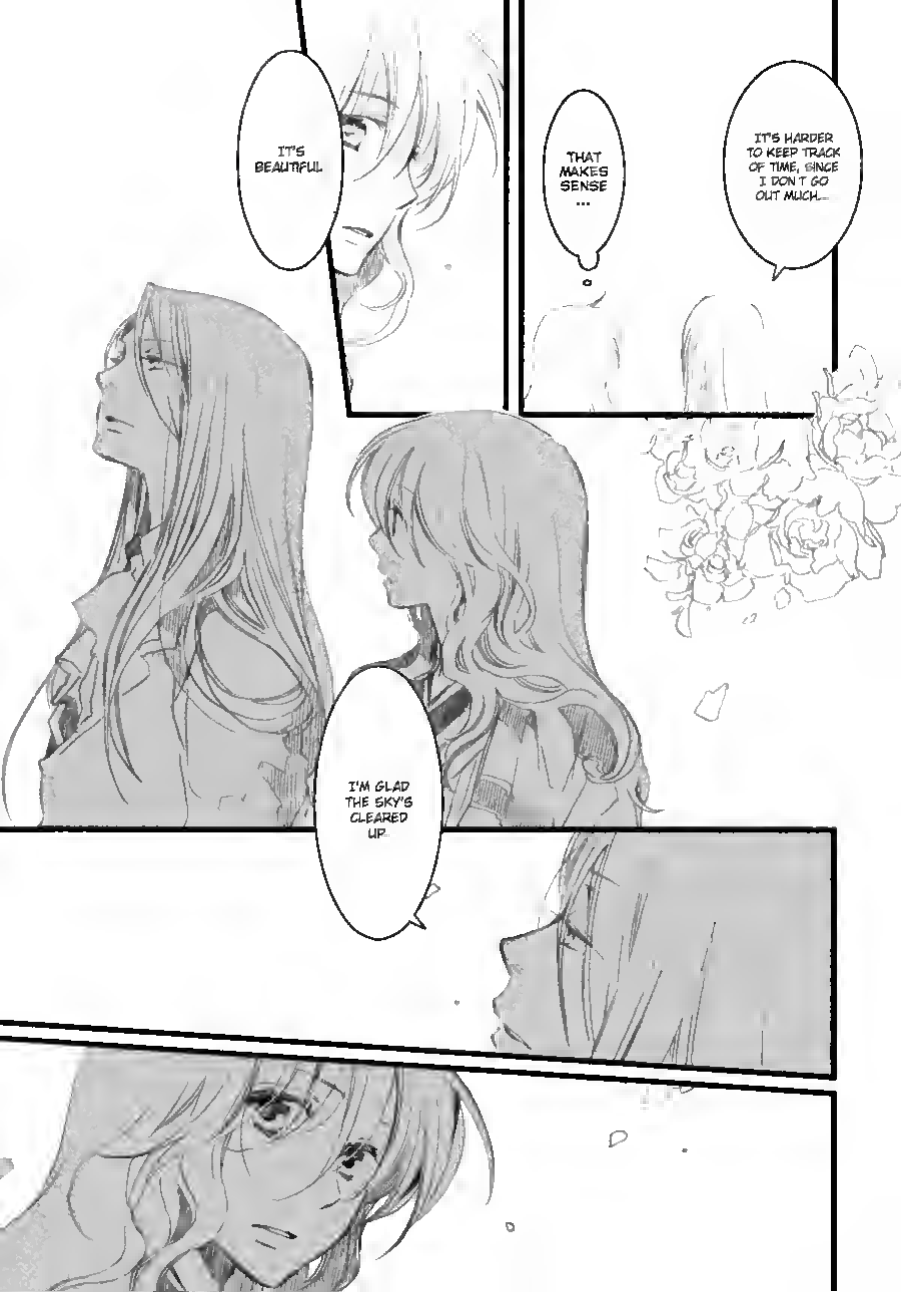
IT WAS...
IF YOUNG MEN WITHOUT RESOURCES REQUEST THE SUPPORT OF POWERFUL, WEALTHY ARISTOCRATS...
AND THE ARISTOCRATS ARE TAKEN BY THEIR BEAUTY, THINGS PROGRESS AS YOU WOULD EXPECT
IT'S SAID THAT GOING TO A "FLOWER FESTIVAL" IN MY GRANDFATHER'S TIME WAS MUCH THE SAME AS VISITING A RED-LIGHT DISTRICT
THAT IT HAS SUCH HIGH STATUS TODAY SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING OF A MIRACLE TO ME.
THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HE IS TALENTED FAR BEYOND THE NORM.
MAYBE IT'S DUE TO THE POWER OF THE ARISTOCRACY WANING IN THIS DAY AND AGE...
EITHER WAY, HARUCU-DONO'S ACHIEVEMENTS ARE REALLY SOMETHING

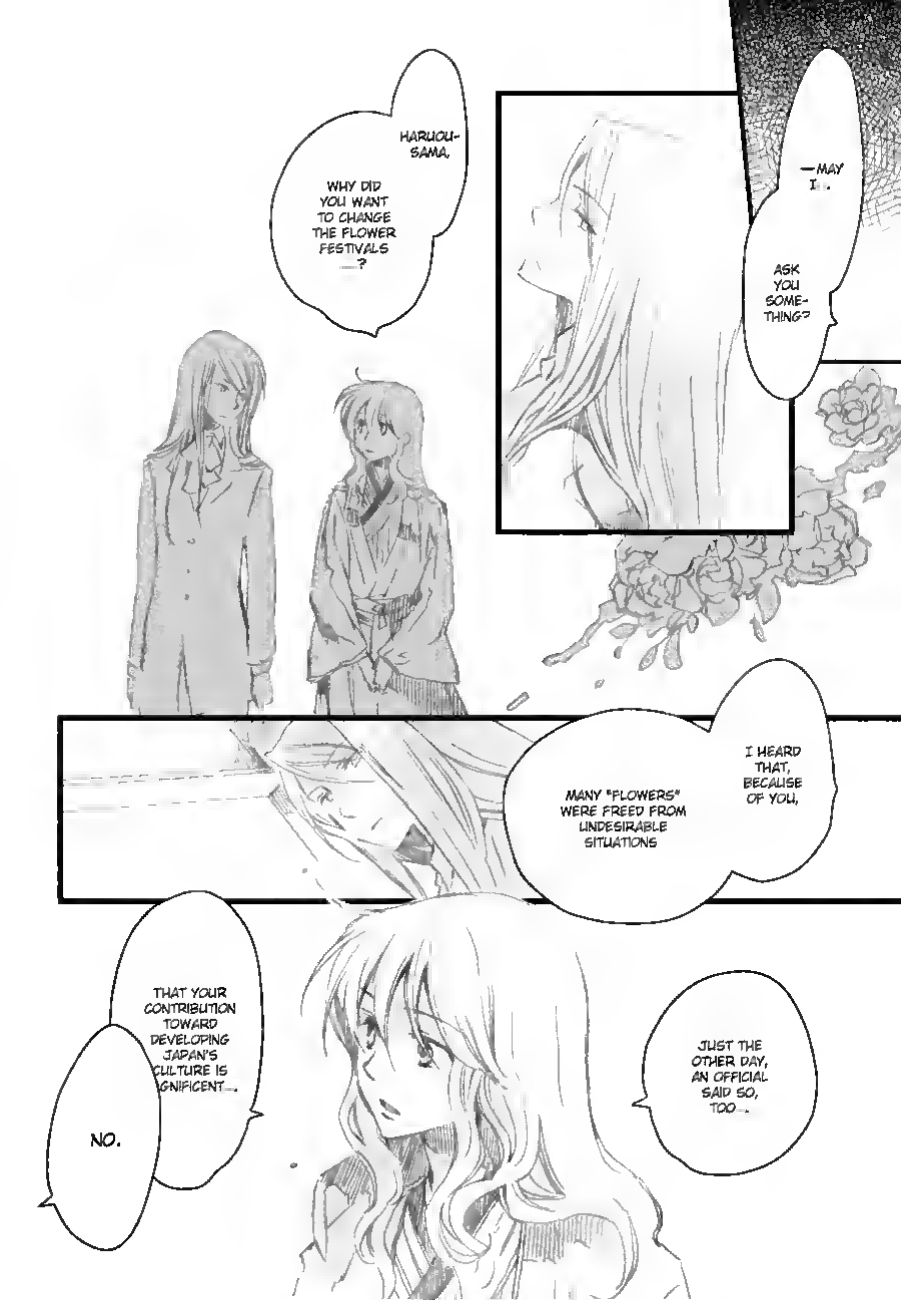
NO,
NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS NOW. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE MEANT.
ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD IGNORE ODD BEHAVIOR FROM PRODIGIES...?
SO...
UH...
I DIDN'T MEAN..
OH?
Ah.
A BUTTERFLY.
INUOU-DONO, YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'VE GOT A FLOWER MASTER WHO'LL IGNORE ODD BEHAVIOR..
hUh?
...YOU'RE QUITE PERSUASIVE...
hUh?
WHAT?
What?
What?
It's Inuou-dono's flower master
No...

Silence
...
KNOCK
KNOCK
HARUOU-SA...
WHAT?
AH,
HUH?
YOU LEFT MY PAPERS IN THE OFFICE
WHAT?
OH!
YOU WENT TO GET THEM YOURSELF?
IF YOU HAD CALLED ME, I WOULD HAVE...
HAVE INUOU AND THE REST HEADED BACK?
HM?
OH,
YES.

I'M NOT THAT HOPELESS.
I CAN MANAGE THIS MUCH MYSELF.
DID YOU HAVE FUN?
...
HUH?
NOTHING...
AH!
YES, IT WAS FUN!
It was so sudden, I didn't know what you were asking about!
THANK YOU FOR ASKING!!
AH.
WELL...

HARUOU-SAMA,
DINNER IS—
WHAT A PAI—
WONDERFUL!
IT'S ALL READY. SO I'VE COME TO GET YOU.
NOW, LET'S GO!
Rushed
—OH.
TONIGHT'S A FULL MOON.
...WASN'T IT JUST A HARVEST MOON...?
HUH?
THAT WAS OVER A MONTH AGO.
OH...

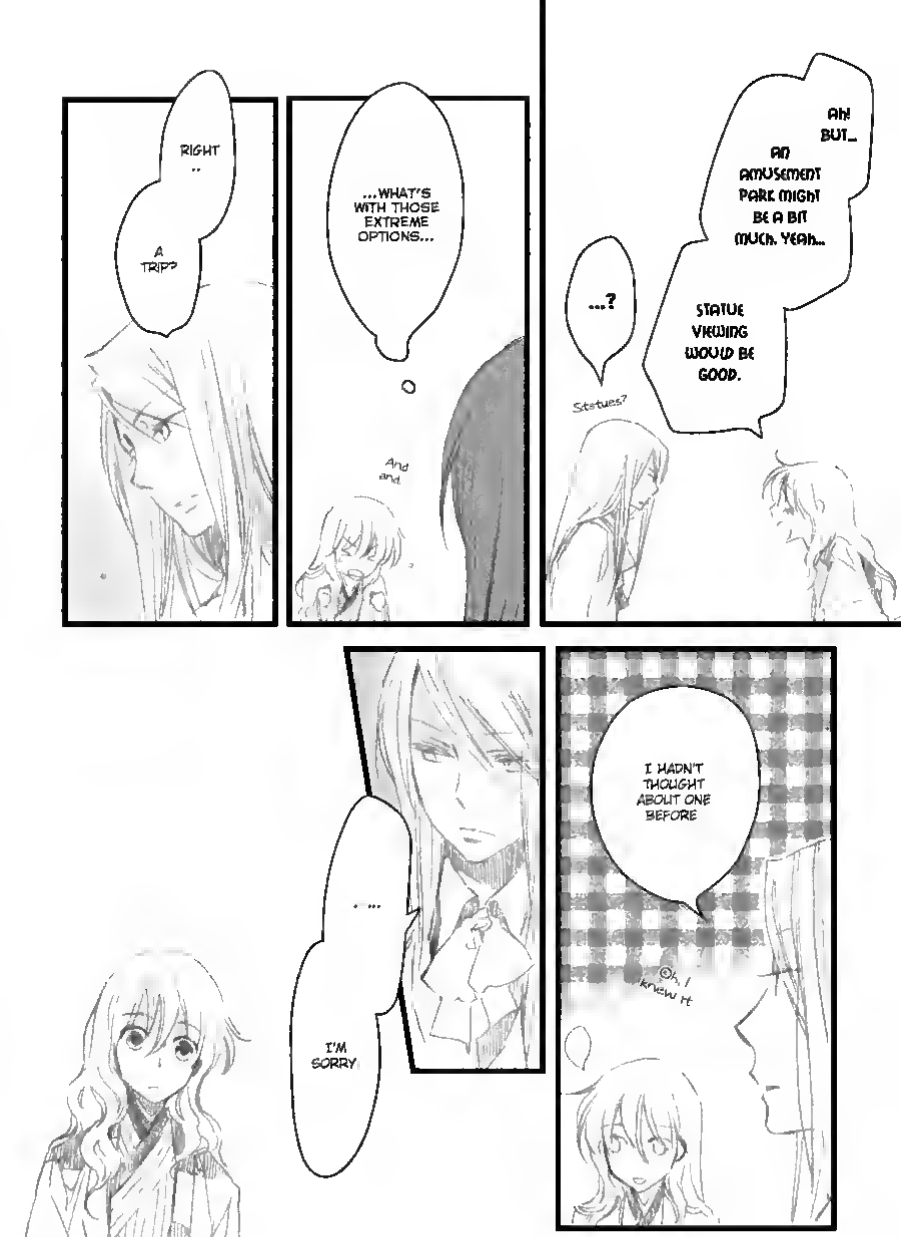

IT'S BEAUTIFUL
THAT MAKES SENSE ...
IT'S HARDER TO KEEP TRACK OF TIME, SINCE I DON'T GO OUT MUCH...
I'M GLAD THE SKY'S CLEARED UP.


HARUOU-SAMA,
WHY DID YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE FLOWER FESTIVALS —?
—MAY I...
ASK YOU SOME-THING?
I HEARD THAT, BECAUSE OF YOU,
MANY "FLOWERS" WERE FREED FROM UNDESIRABLE SITUATIONS
JUST THE OTHER DAY, AN OFFICIAL SAID SO, TOO...
NO.
THAT YOUR CONTRIBUTION TOWARD DEVELOPING JAPAN'S CULTURE IS GNIFICENT...

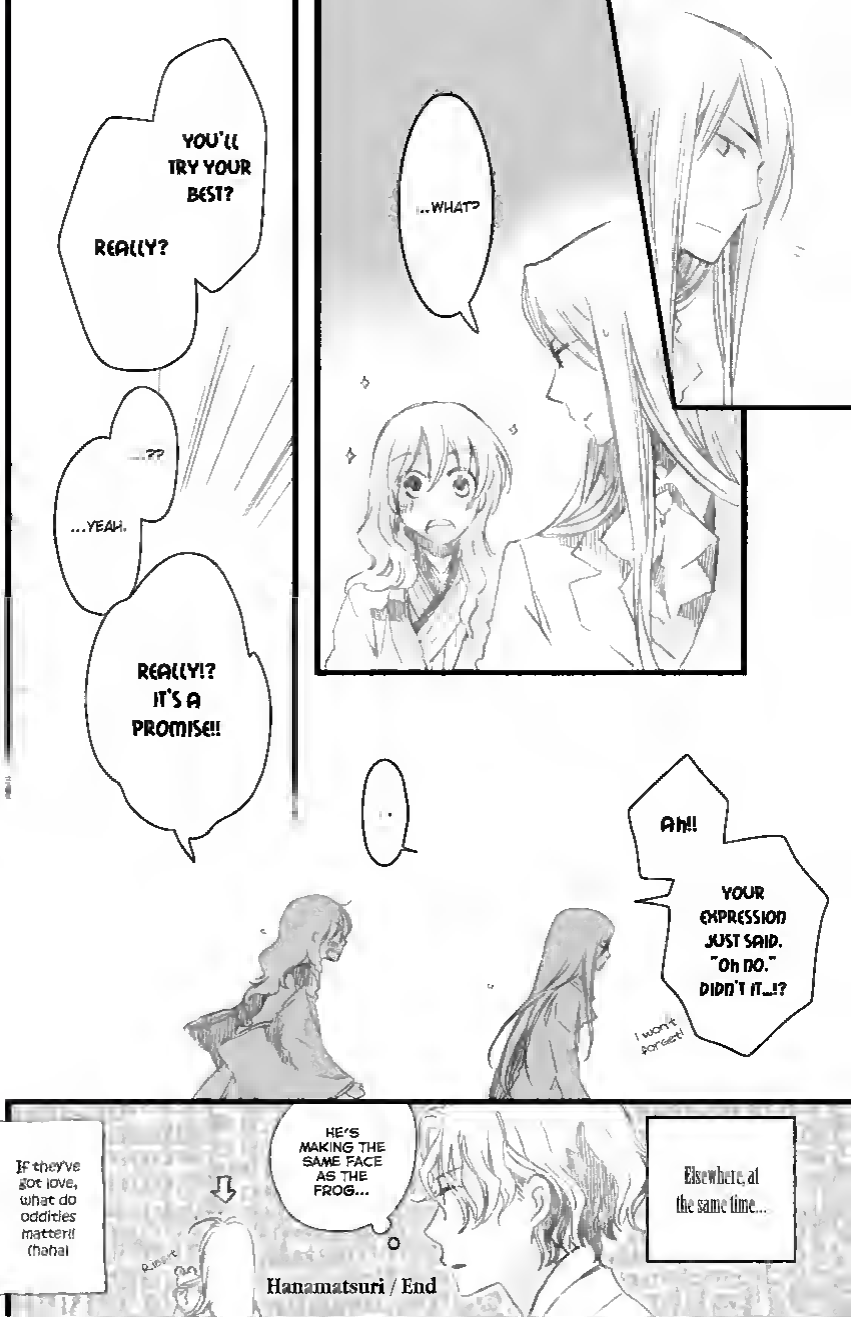
MY...
INTENTION WASN'T TO SAVE "FLOWERS"
I JUST ACTED TO GET WHAT I WANTED.
WHAT HE WANTED ...
AND WHAT...
WAS THAT
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO KNOW
...YOU WON'T TELL ME?
...
LET'S GO
AH,
OKAY

TODAY...
WHILE I WAS WITH INUOU-DONO AND THE REST OF THEM...
...WHY ARE YOU ASKING THAT NOW?
THE TALK TURNED TO HOW OFTEN YOU GET OUT
I...
SAID THAT WE DON'T GO OUT MUCH
...WE DON'T,
HUH
YES...
WE DON'T...

OUMI...
OH, INUOU'S FLOWER MASTER?
YOU HOLD SUCH SPECIAL STATUS, THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS...
OUMI-SAMA SAID THAT BECAUSE...
OH, BUT ...
.....
AND I WANTED TO ASK ABOUT IT
SO... I WONDERED WHY YOU CAME TO HOLD SUCH STATUS,
HOW ABOUT FLOWER GAZING, OR A FESTIVAL, OR A TRIP...!
T— THAT'S GREAT...!
...AND IF I WANT TO GO OUT? FOR SOME FUN


RIGHT
..
A TRIP?
...WHAT'S WITH THOSE EXTREME OPTIONS...
And and
AH! BUT... AN AMUSEMENT PARK MIGHT BE A BIT MUCH. YEAH...
STATUE VIEWING WOULD BE GOOD.
...?
Statues?
I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT ONE BEFORE
Oh, I knew it
. ...
I'M SORRY

...
...I'M SORRY.
MEAN THAT YOU WON'T GO OUT AFTER ALL...?
DOES THAT...
...NO,
IT WAS SELFISH OF ME TO REQUEST IT.
I'M SORRY...
I... WILL TRY MY BEST.


YOU'LL TRY YOUR BEST?
REALLY?
...??
...YEAH.
REALLY!? IT'S A PROMISE!!
...WHAT?
..
AH!!
YOUR EXPRESSION JUST SAID, "Oh NO." DIDN'T IT...!?
I won't forget!
If they've got love, what do oddities matter!! (haha)
HE'S MAKING THE SAME FACE AS THE FROG...
Elsewhere, at the same time...
Hanamatsuri / End

ZERO COMICS

花祭
はなまつり

あき

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「花選び」と呼ばれる金持ちの道楽…。

選ばれる「花」は芸を生業とする少年、財界人の集うパーティーで芸を披露し、自らの支援者を探す…それが「花祭」。

金を持て余すもの達は好みの「花」を選んで、惜しみなく投資する、そんな彼らを「花主」と呼び、次のお気に入りを見つけると切り捨てていく。

そんな希薄な関係の「花」と「花主」だが、彼らにも人のココロがあり、美しくて哀しい…そして優しい物語が紡ぎだされて…!?

奇才、あき氏がお届けする新感覚「恋愛論」、遂に待望の単行本化!!